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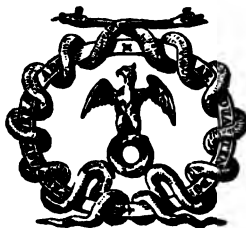


IDYLS AND SONGS

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

—
1848—1854
—



LONDON

JOHN W. PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND

1854

280. N. 534.

— ἔχω καλά τε φράσαι, τόλμα τέ μοι
εὐθεῖα γλῶσσαν ὀρνύει λέγειν·
ἄμαχον δὲ κρύψαι τὸ συγγενὲς ἦθος—

TO ALFRED TENNYSON,

POET LAUREATE.

YOUR honour'd name, dear Friend, unask'd,
I set before my pages :
While for the grace-conferring theft
Free grace my heart presages.

Should verse of mine, I oft had thought,
Dare plead for public trial,
No private patron I would seek,
Nor risk a proud denial.

Yet as before th' impartial judge
In open court I venture,
Some natural fears will force their way ;
Some dread of sovereign censure.

I turn a suppliant gaze on you :
A judge, if any, royal :
A soul in friendship and in song
Proved pure and brave and loyal.

I seek not your just-balanced praise ;
Your arm from foes to shield me :
I hold you judge in last resort,
And to your verdict yield me.

When to the Gods our prayers we bring,
'Tis with their names we grace them :
I dedicate the songs to you,
As on your knees I place them.

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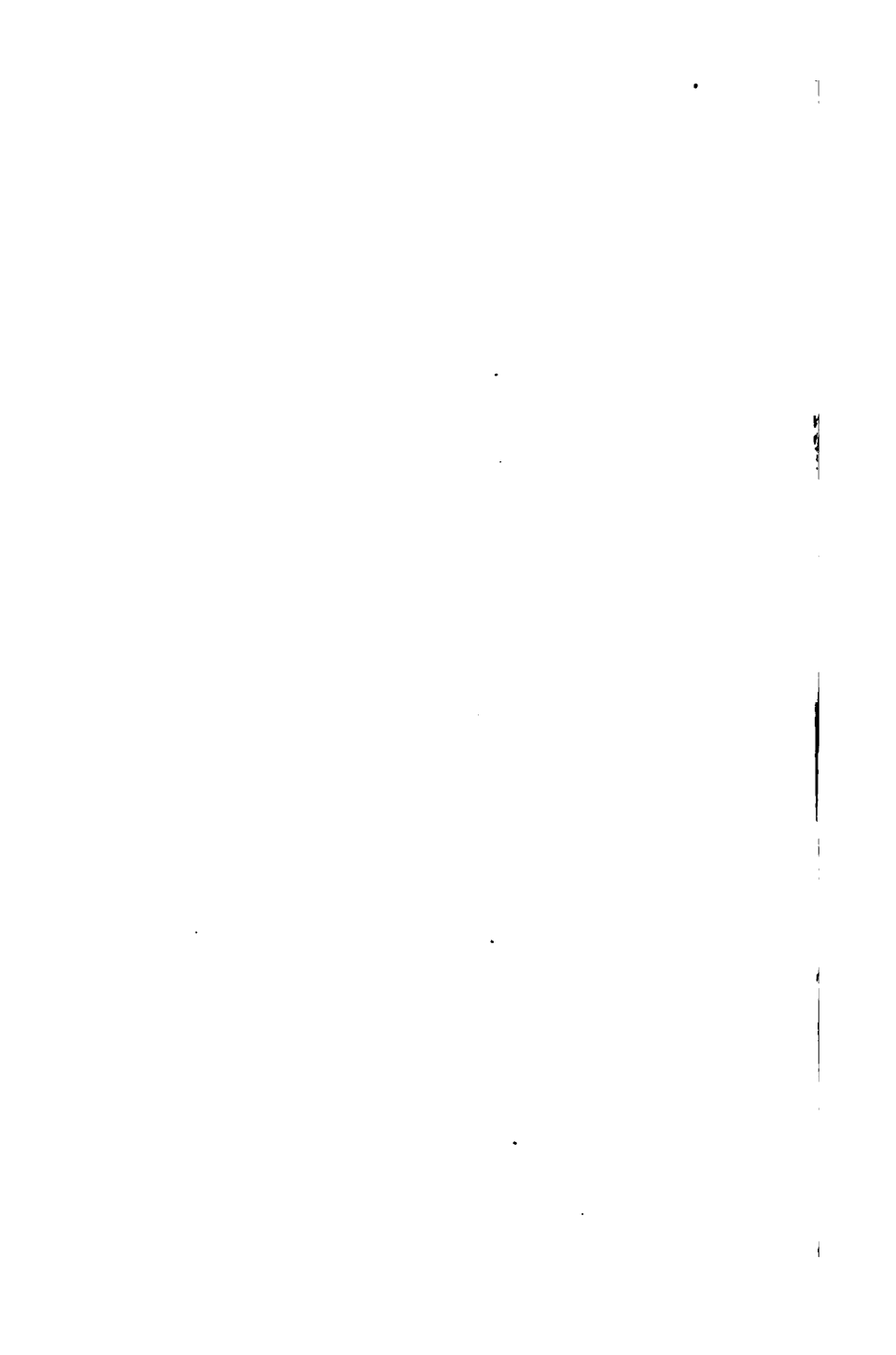
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II.

RIDING TO COVER.

"Elen loro,
Never, oh never!"

Edgar. AND so 'tis rumour'd, Alfred;—but you
knew him—

You must have heard it,—that his brain, once clear
As sunsets, by the fresh north-east blown thro',
Is touch'd with long-fear'd madness.

Alfred. At the grange,
E'en at the clanging smithy, 'twas the talk,
Clench'd with broad grins, and phrases of the field,
And all, they said, for love. She slighted him
(You must remember *who*), tho' for her sake
He left his uncle's country—the loved cry
And well-known music of the neighbour pack,
And sloped a raw keen ride o'er twilight moors,
To meet her giddy beautyship, who oft
Paraded it amidst the scarlet throng
In distant Hazelden: where her merriest laugh
Gush'd quick and free thro' misty morning air,
That gemm'd her flaunting feathers. Oft he met her,
With sidelong looks that watch'd, in hopeless hope
Of cordial recognition from the fair,
Long known, long chased, long sigh'd for.

But she still

At casual call would leave his side, to pour
On chance companions of the field, those smiles,
Those full, heart-shaking looks of girlish glee,
For which his fairest acres,—those for which
Sir Gilbert fought at Sidon,—in his thought
Had been too cheap a purchase. So the run
Went on: one clouded heart among the cheery,—

One heart that echo'd not, when air was loud
 With deep-tuned hound, and whistle, and the whoop
 Where all the man went out upon th' halloo:
 One breast, that when the chase went hotly on
 In breath-restraining silence, rang with cries
 Of sorrow, ill-suppress'd.

Edgar.

And could it be
 That one so loved could pass him by and scorn him,—
 Proved faithful through long summers,—loyal, true,
 The wide and open-handed soul, that ere
 He came to grief, first ever in the field,
 Across the gap spoke welcome with his eye,
 And outran words with smiling?

Alfred.

I know not,
 For who could sound a whirlpool with his line,—
 The causeless eddyings of a flighty girl?
 He, too, in silence on his life-blood prey'd,
 Corroding his own heart.

Yet once by hap

Close resting in his arbour, whence in view
 The dark-mass'd elms, as in a second spring,
 Rose pile on pile, dash'd with the summer growth
 Of lighter foliage, thro' my passive ears
 The murmur'd music of his sorrow crept,
 Borne o'er the flowers in snatches. And his song,
 As I can frame it, thus or thus—(accept
 My ruder utterance)—ran its course uncheck'd,
 Unconscious, as upon the woods he gazed.

'Too well I mind it: 'twas in spring we met,—
 The springtime of a year; life's springtime, rich
 In love's first flowers, the garden of the soul,
 Nurtured and fann'd 'neath hope's young fearlessness.
 O, Day—Day—Day—untimely birth of Time!
 Day, that gave life to life,—then, as in scorn,
 More than reversed the gift:—bid childhood flee,
 And young unconscious sleep; ill changed for dreams
 That glow'd one hour of phantom blessedness,
 Then pass'd, and left me waking. Was it right
 That all should end thus? God!—That love, whose birth
 Was terror in its calmness; born of calm;
 The halcyon days of ocean and of spring,
 Earth all one joy, should so waste down, so die,

No summer's sun to chase the zephyr clouds,
 All longing hopes and sweet desires fulfilling?
 Rich was the promise of thy youth, my love,—
 Rich its fulfilment; for thy spring of glory
 I noted; brimm'd with life thy years went by;
 Their joy, that watch'd thy young unconsciousness;
 For all unknown to thee were thine own spells,
 The light that danced in gladness round thy steps,
 The eye-enmeshing locks, the smile, that woke,
 And smiled at its own waking; woke, and fled
 With gracious calm, and promised re-awaking!
 And art thou not more perfect with thy years?
 Thy years have but perfected thee the more,
 Sweet maid :—grace born of grace; my heart's desire;
 My memory thou : my full existence :—mine!
 Mine—never mine—not yet mine—ne'er to be mine—
 Never, oh! never!' Edgar—on those words
 He paused: my breath went fast: some common chord
 Of young remembrance struck perchance alike,—
 Some song's recurrent burden. Then again,
 'Never, oh! never!'—and he touch'd his brow—
 'I was a child once;—oh, that I one day,
 One little day, one little, little day,
 Could be that child once more,—once more to hope;
 Once more bewail hopes wasted :—know once more
 What virtue is in tears, so long refused,
 To respite me from this near-lowering madness.'

Edgar. Sure 'tis no subject for a reckless mirth,
 Best chorus oft and language of the field,
 To see man's purest aim—as his—the man
 Within the man,—foil'd, blotted out, annull'd.
 And has he found no medicine for that woe?

Alfred. Time brings him no relief, that cures all else;
 The stagnant even current of his life,
 Pure artificial stillness, that scarce knew
 The rocking course of days and nights go by,
 Annull'd the lenient privilege of time,
 And he breathes on in sadness.

Edgar. O, when Love
 Consumes himself, thus baffled, better far
 Sweetness ferment to hate, and hate, with years,
 Die in forgetfulness—than so to linger
 'Gainst hope still hoping!

Alfred. I have heard of one
Love-haunted, e'en beneath monastic garb
Assumed in that despairing: restlessly
In sleep, or waking, to *her* side, whom Death
Had veil'd in tripled cerements, fancy-borne.
Long time such frenzy tore him, till at length
Within her three-months' mansion—Death's own home—
He sought his heart's desire,—by darken'd step,
Thro' brooding danks descending:—till he found her,
His sweet one, laid within th' abhorred grasp,
And death-consign'd to horror. From her face,
Fair yet—yet fair—reluctant Beauty's wreck,
The gathering grave-dews with unsteady touch
He cleansed,—then with one cry went blindly forth,
By Death, and Love, and Love in Death, o'ermaster'd.
But when the fit was on him, when the thought
Of lost endearment, prized the more thro' loss,
Hung on him with a spell,—before his eyes
He spread that garment and the signs of death;
With thoughts of all she had been intermingling
What now she was—what needs must yet become;—
And so he cured his love.

Edgar.

Alas! alas!

III.

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

GISELLA, thou canst scarce recall the day
When from the huts we led thy feet away :—
Rough huts, that in an interspace of ground
Betwixt the road-way and the hedge were found
In close confiding neighbourhood, that told
Of birds thick nestled against winter's cold ;
Of equal rights and brotherhood, that reign
'Mong those who common laws and bonds disdain ;
Last of th' ancestral restlessness of bands,
Their light tents shifting oft o'er Arya's sands ;
Thence free to range o'er Europe in the chase
Of that old half-forgot abiding place.
Thou wert the fairest of the youthful rout
That hid and sought their comrades in and out
Among the shaded nooks, whose paling fires
Just touch'd the darkening features of the sires ;
The sires, the full-eyed maidens of the race,
Rich in their native heritage of grace.
How could they fly and let thee leave their sight,
Little Gisella, brightest of the bright ?
Ah ! happy day for us, but sad for them ;
How could thy tribe thus fling aside their gem ?
Was it the tyrant force of narrow laws
That left their steps no room for thought or pause,
And chased them e'en at midnight from the nest
Where that wild camp lay plunged in careless rest ?
Or was it force or fraud that stay'd thee there,
When in the haze of morning's thicken'd air
Around a whitening circle's ashen heap
We saw thy crouching form kneel down and creep,

And stretch thy little hands in hope to gain
Some warmth that might appease the chilling rain.
Could we have pass'd and left thee to thy fate?
Thou wert too young, too fair, too desolate!
Too desolate for us to feel that we
Were working aught of fraud in claiming thee;
Too fair to leave thee to be toss'd and whirl'd
On the rude billows of a thoughtless world;
Too young to know the severance of race
That spoke in every line of thy wild face,
And on the broken utterance of thy tongue
Its pity-pleading Eastern accents hung.
—With what strange glee the children welcomed in
The little stranger, come of alien kin;
The diamond-eyed, the dark-hair'd, brought to share
The nursery of the golden-lock'd and fair!
Born free to range without restraint or fear,
Where'er the earth was green, or skies were clear;
Born Nature's nursling, uncontroll'd and wild,
Yet like themselves, in heart a very child;
A child, with more than childhood's broken speech,
A young disciple, whom the young might teach.
On went the years, the past seem'd all forgot,
And those who saw thee, bless'd thine alter'd lot;
Saved from barbarian life, the joys to share
Of those who breathe in civilizing air:
Beneath the shield of order'd laws to move,
Safe paths, fix'd customs, regulated love:
The staid observances of social life,
The studies that shape out the finish'd wife,
The task that morn by morn in order falls,
The life-experience, learnt in shops and calls,
The licensed fever of the Christmas ball,
The harp, the netting, and the landscape scrawl;
The church, where youth for fashion's sake are brought,
The water-frolic, with devotion sought;
And all things else, that nurse and fan the fair
To be the lovely greenhouse-flowers they are.
So be it, bright one! be it so! No sighs
Of fond remembrance in thy breathings rise;
Thou canst not wish that thou wert yet the child
That first we knew thee, strange, untaught, and wild,

•

The sweet field-flower in Nature's garden grown,
Claim'd by the dews and stars of heaven their own.
For thee that past is past, and dimly gleams
As far-off planets float in morning dreams ;
By Nature's universal firm decree
Our past seems fated, though our present free ;
Man may not shift in thought his life's old scene,
Or shape a course aught else than it has been.
Re-tread the years gone by, by memory's power ;
Still day seems link'd to day, and hour to hour ;
E'en from our birth the long enthrallment springs,
And knits us to the fated chain of things.
Yet, fair Gisella, born to range unbound
By those firm links that o'er our lives are wound,
Sure oft unconscious feelings, self-repress'd,
When custom's weight hangs dully on thy breast,
When graceful courtesies but serve to hide
Rash scheming love, to lust too near allied ;
Or when the seeming gloss refinement lends,
But gilds the native barrenness of friends,—
Must bear thee back to what thou wert before,
Breathe a soft sigh for days that dawn no more ;
For unschool'd virtue, unapplauded truth,
Youth unestranged from age, and age from youth ;
An equal poverty that all endured,
Alike to wandering and to toil inured :
Vice undisguised and fearless to proclaim
That man's old nature yet abides the same.
As gales of mountain air, though chill, yet free,
Such thoughts, Gisella, sure must breathe o'er thee,
Amid the currents of the perfumed breeze
That eddy round the languid halls of ease.
'Tis better that thou art with us, than there
Where first we found thee in thy young despair :—
I would not so mistrust our daily course
As to turn back the current to its source :
Yet sure unfetter'd justice, stern, though kind,
Holds out an even balance for mankind.
Why should we close our partial sight, and cry,
'Tis we alone that live in Nature's eye,
When in the open secret of her plan,
She measures out one even lot for man ;

•

When 'midst the seeming ebb and flow of things
Her powers hold on the flight of tranquil wings,
Unite the sever'd links of mortal life,
Hush down the clamours of an idle strife,
And in the circlings of their course maintain
The noiseless tenour of her equal reign?

•

IV.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

ALICE read, one summer's day,
Fragments of an oft-read play;
Scenes of cheerful woodland hue,
Jest and sunshine slanting through;
Alleys worn by gamesome feet:
Carols in a green retreat:
Love in earnest, thought in jest:
Wisdom's self as Folly drest:
Till her happy accents alter'd,
And in half-pretence she falter'd
Archly whispering, 'I can see
That the tale has wearied thee;
Should I lay the leaves aside?'
'As you like it—so'—I cried,
Half-reluctant to repress
Or own her gay capriciousness:
First she closed the leaves: and then
Smiled, and open'd them again;
Then in accents calmer, sweeter,
For the deepening story meeter,
Read the blithesome sweet lament
Of Rosalind in banishment:
Of Aliens's soft complaining:
Of Orlando's happy feigning;
Through the mazes of his garden
Tracking Love in cheerful Arden.
On she went, as though in fear
Some she knew not what was near:
Startling as surprised to find
Huntsmen coming up behind.

Now her eager breathings fail,
Cheeks are flush'd, and then are pale :
Roses red and roses fair
Budded, bloom'd, and faded there ;—
Till the gentle hand I took,
Yielded free from word or look,
Whispering : ' Would'st thou fly with me,
Mine own Rosalind to be ?
Mine to solace and to bless
In such a woodland wilderness ?'
Ah that whisper'd faint reply !
' As you like it : Thine am I.'
Ah, that lightly flutter'd breast !
Ah, the smile of love confest !
—Mighty minstrel, in thine heart
Sure my Rosalind had part ;
Long hast thou my solace been ;
Long in thee the Past I've seen,
Summon'd up from cave and cell
By thy wonder-working spell :
But henceforth I'll read my story
In the records of thy glory,
And for ever shall there be
Prophecies for Love in thee.

THE PROPOSAL.

I RECOLLECT not how the morn began
 On which we told our love. The bright hours ran
 Thro' the first circles of the dance of day,
 And we seem'd unconcern'd and light as they.
 So long our souls had linger'd in the haze
 That Hope untold o'er trivial life can raise ;
 So dear the magic paradise where all
 In very silence was most voluble ;
 We cared not from that happy vale to rise,
 Or read Love's answer save in loving eyes.

We stood beside the terrace, when the sun
 By narrowing shadows show'd his course half run :
 The vase-set roses in high blaze o'erflush'd
 His sunset tints anticipating blush'd—
 Of evening's clouds the ruby roses tell—
 And yet—how much before that evening fell !
 In idle broken talk I held the maid,
 Her fair face bathed in cool half-tints of shade ;
 And gazed beneath th' o'erbrimming hat, and task'd
 Her girlish knowledge with the lore I ask'd :
 Each flower's exotic site, each barbarous name :
 And pluck'd them oft, and ask'd her oft the same ;
 In that loved mood when words but serve to screen
 An undercurrent of sweet thoughts between.
 Still as she spoke she turn'd, and eyed the child
 That stole between us—fair and strong and wild—
 The plaything of the house : till call'd away
 Young limbs in baths of noontide sleep to lay
 By voices from above. Yet fix'd we stay'd :
 Each thinking, now we part, yet each delay'd
 By one sweet half reveal'd, half hidden thought
 Alike in each heart by that dalliance wrought.
 Was it to part us that the breezes play'd,
 Tempering the heat by wafts of seeming shade ?

The rose blush'd out in sweetness and in light;
The circling ringdoves wheel'd their amorous flight?
Was it to part us that alone we stood,
While each heard no sound but the beating blood?
—A little laugh—and—' Oh, I near forgot:
Tell Andrew, please, to weed the violet plot.'
And ' Sure you see he's somewhat strange of late,
I heard him hum at church the ' Canongate.''
She spoke the rising tumult to repress,
Words only fail'd her in the moment's stress.
Gravely she spoke: and yet we scarce refrain'd
The under-laugh that show'd our hearts constrain'd,
And awkward blushing words came stammering thro'
As if our eyes each fear'd the other's view:
Some strange repelling force still interven'd,
Some film each glance from answering glances screen'd.
A deeper silence yet, a dread to stir:
I felt self pass and die away in her:
The heart was faint beneath the weight of bliss,
The burden of its own deliciousness;
Till one long curl that o'er her forehead stray'd
Across my cheek by some wild gust was laid.
With pretty smiling shyness back she moved,
As tho' mere chance might not tell how she loved.
Sweet trifter! why should else a blush adorn
The conscious cheek—that blush'd again for scorn?
—But as I gazed from out the garden door
Quick ran the fair child at our sight once more,
Flush'd, just set free from sleep's unconscious bands,
With breathless laughter grasp'd and join'd our hands,
With smiles and words that had a deeper sense
Than could be known by that young innocence.
I felt my happy fingers clasp'd in thine;
O mine henceforth for ever—mine—yet mine—
O tearful smiles that spoke the victory won!
O whisper'd words, still ended, still begun!
O soft confessions that the day outwore
Still with the deepening twilight deepening more!
O happy sleep, by woodland music stirr'd;
O happier waking with the jocund bird!
Awake, Aurora, bring the sun mid-way!
Blush, ruby rose, prophetic of the day!

VI.

BLANCHE AND ADA.

PERSONS.

OLD MAN.
ARTHUR } Orphan Brothers.
EDWIN }
BLANCHE, Daughter to Old Man.
ADA.

Scene : A Garden. Enter BLANCHE (singing).

O HAPPY, happy season
Of youth and truth and glee :
What are the days of reason,
Childhood, compared with thee ?
O day of pure affection,
Undimm'd by recollection,
We catch thy warm infection,
And yield ourselves to thee !

Bring once again the hours
That went so lightly by :
Whose footsteps were on flowers,
Whose very earth was sky.
When mirth was fresh and sereless ;
When solitude was tearless ;
When love was free and fearless,
And truth was true to thee.

Ah, could love's later yearning
Prove childhood's presage true :
Win back the unreturning,
And knit his chain anew !
Our hearts forgive thy treason ;
We yield the years of reason
To gain thy thoughtless season :
Ah, take us back to thee !

[*Exit.*

Arthur. The sun rides high: the mid-day weariness,
 The stillness of full noontide is on earth:
 A feverish hum, dense insect-life, pervades
 This spiky growth of upward shooting plants:
 Below the lawn, betwixt us and the breadth
 Of hot horizons, moving in its sleep,
 Th' uneasy streamlet slumbers, and the reek
 Blots the near landscape. Let us to the cool:
 Perchance the dew may greet us, as a friend
 For friends delaying.

Edwin. Well, when all is said,
 The practical conclusion gilds the speech.
 Your sudden seriousness, dear friend (a plague
 On all descriptions!) took me with surprise.
 Haste! or the freshness of your welcoming
 May dry with time. Haste; when the heart has flown
 The breath flies with it. Sure o'er all the world
 Your fair ones smile our English calmness down,
 And mar the philosophic even breath,
 As one, whoe'er she be, no other cause,
 As one does yours.

Arthur. My brother! But you claim
 A traveller's licence, as of one long wont
 To skate from heart to heart, and reap no warmth
 Save that inspired by healthy exercise.
 Ay, smile: In sober seriousness, my thought
 Was but to guide you to that aged friend,
 Lord of the fields and mansion; him we named
 Of old, Laertes, ten years back, when first
 An orphan pair from hot Algiers returning,
 He came with welcome forth to cheer the boys,
 And bade his little Blanche smile down the gloom
 That darken'd round the strangers. Come! I see him
 Within his orchard, where the blossom snows
 Of our late spring upon the trees are caught,
 That o'er the turf hang forth dishevell'd boughs,
 And promise fruit for snow flakes.

Edwin. Hush! I thought so:
 'Tis e'en the same old man, by country tastes
 Among his orchards rooted, confident
 That here at least all things are as they were,
 And so will be for ever.

Arthur. We may speak;

The rising gale that meets us as we gaze
Will shield us.

Edwin. Blow, fresh gale, for ever blow,
If ever on thy wings wilt bear, as now,
The morning songs of Blanche! 'Tis she, I know her,
Veil'd in that snowy mist of falling blooms
From pear and apple shower'd, a silver swarm
Thick on the golden ringlets, nursery-bright:—
While all else promised in the child has won
A maiden consummation, as the rose
Perfected from the rosebud.

Arthur. What, my traveller!
My young Ulysses! all the boasted calm,
That hoarded philosophic apathy
Dissolved among the quiet scenes of home!
Now call the man up, Edwin; lo, the breeze
Already with her careless song is fraught,
And thro' the orchard all her soul is streaming!

BLANCHE *sings.*

'Mid the flowers Cecilia playing
On the blithesome first of May:
Ah, what summons ends her straying:
'Tis the nurse who calls 'Away—
'Come away, Zeela dear, come away, come away, come
hither:'
She left her flowers and fled: the bees flew with her.

'What has nurse within the basket,
Sheeted o'er with snowy white?'
Ere again the child could ask it
Nurse unveils the darling sight.
'Lady dear, come near, lady dear, come see your
brother:
This bright morning brought you from your mother.'

'May I touch him, may I take him?
Will he stop with us all day?
May I kiss him, may I wake him,
Bear him to the flowers to play?'
'Many a day, dear child, many a day will he be with
you:
Many a kiss will take, and many give you.'

'Gently take him, kiss him dearly :
 He is your own brother true :
 Now there lives not one so nearly
 Bound in blood and love to you.
 'Other hearts his heart, other hearts from you will
 sever :
 Ah, love him now, that he may love you ever.'

Sudden she ceased : for now from shaken leaves
 A mimic shower the dewy boughs sent forth,
 Quick sideways gleaming pearls, that fled the steps
 Of those two brothers :

Whom the old Laertes
 With earnest welcome greeted : him the most
 Whose ruddier tints proclaim'd a traveller's dues
 To rain and air and sunshine.

But the maid,
 Before whose eyes the playmate of her youth,
 Long years of absence o'er, stood unexpected,
 Just falter'd out a greeting, e'en as though
 A space so short had flown since last they met
 As scarce made greeting needful.

But she smiled,
 (As if some happy secret shared together
 Made one of two) on Arthur :—

'Happy boy !'
 Thought Edwin, 'bless'd, yet careless :—'

And the soul
 That with a Briton's frank and thoughtless bearing
 Thro' foreign crowds had elbow'd on a way,
 E'en when it sought them, seeming to despise
 The marvels of the land, gave up its strength,
 Shot thro' with sudden pain, and quick access
 Of earlier tenderness.

The pride of heart,
 The plans of settled calmness, that would watch
 His love, long left, as tho' he loved her not,
 Fell from him instant, and th' impetuous flood
 Of troubled thoughts, by sight of Blanche half stay'd,
 There as she stood, broke o'er him.

But again
 Amid the linnet-notes, that fill'd the hush,
 Sweet symphonies of Nature, when the heart

Stays in its music, and the pause affrights :—
Gaily that old man greeted him : then said :—
' Things are not so with us, in this calm nook
Of quiet hearts, as ofttime 'tis with those
Whose chattering chorus welcomes in a friend,
While telling equals asking :—we have all
To learn from you : little or nought to give :
That little, yours already. Long, too long,
And *Bianca* will confirm it,—for this day
We've waited. Now 'tis here. Well. Why, 'tis well:
Time's hand was weighty on me. *Satis*. Hence:
The summer-house, your old unalter'd haunt
Again should hear your voice :—your feet, I see,
Themselves would guide you thither.'

And they moved
In silent file : as oft the Indian tracks
His game thro' forests, while the gloom of firs
Is whiten'd in the snow-blink : so that band
Among the shower'd blossoms.

But ere long
Within that arbour seated (she by him
Whose presence each scann'd eager)—from his lips
Again in utterance parted, flow'd the tale
Rich with the sights and thoughts of other lands.
Rivers, he said, had borne him, which had kept
One individual life, a youth in age,
One being, since their waves first wash'd the feet
Of crown'd imperial Rome : or bore the pride
Of legions southward, when from vanquish'd Gaul
They sought Brundusian moorings, or the ports
Of sea-engulf'd Altina :—next, the waves
That gleam'd, a burnish'd wake, beneath the throne,
The golden bark where Cleopatra lay,
And gods beheld her, envying.—Further east,
The stream that fed the garden, work of God
Ere yet man was, his broad advance delaying,
Strain'd thro' the marshes, where Semiramis
Outvied Memphitic splendour, and old Thebes,
Had murmur'd in his ears, a voice of grief,
A tale of the departed.

' But my words
Are of the Past,' he cried, ' they weary you :
The Present has its dues, I now would pay

In duty bound, well pleased, to you, fair maid,
The genius of the Present.'

'Be it so,'
She said, and smiled: arch smile! while on her head
The perfect face was propp'd:—his downcast eyes
There, where the gentle heart heaved waves of grace,
The lines of maiden beauty, fell, then closed
In tender haste withdrawing.

'I forget
Where I was in my journey—well—from Egypt
Westward, thro' Spain: where life's full pilgrimage
Is imaged forth by nature: long waste plains
That sleep and pant beneath a giant heat,
For daily travel: evenings, in the heart
Of some gay city spent, while shadow and song
Fall from the window'd heights, where beauty sits
Dark-eyed amid the latticed jessamines:
And from high doors, the strains, that pierce the skies,
Float outwards on the incense.'

'Happy hours!'
Said Blanche:—'And yet, amid the crowds unknown,
Uncared for and uncaring, you have felt
That scarcely-conscious sinking of the heart
That sighs to view its peopled solitude.'
'I know not—no—perhaps I knew not then
That any thoughts might watch my steps from Eng-
land.

And I have seen, the more I paced this earth,
How one great heart beats thro' it: custom-veil'd:
Here older in its pulses: younger there:
Yet still the same, thro' all.—And something too
Befell—the tale was at my lips e'en now—
That show'd Eve's daughters sisters everywhere.
For as you know, Blanche, dear, in boyhood's days
Our home was Algiers once.'

'She recollects it,'
Laertes said, 'She must:—there was a chain,
Your ten year's gift to the young maid of ten,
Gold network, pendant amber-drops; she wore
I saw, at Arthur's—why not now? why, Blanche?
She wears it oft.'

Arthur. 'So! smiles at last, Ulysses!
Ulysses smiled but seldom.—But I tire
To hear this southern legend.'

And the traveller,
As one well-pleased, pursuing, 'That the wish
Young haunts to view, wrought on him : how he sail'd,
Though tless of war, that raged 'twixt Moor and Frank,
And woke, one morn, close prisoner in Algiers,
A garden-slave amongst untasted fruits,
And all above, around, the watchful sun,
That eyed him as in days of yore it eyed
Brown Hannibal in Carthage. Long he served
(No news from England, none if any lived),
Slave of his slaves, the Moor : yet ere the grapes
Had mellow'd through from topaz to full ruby,
He found himself, he said, in sober truth,
All seriousness, enacting a romance,
Such as his youth had wept o'er, with the joy
Of reading it in story.

But his hearers
By smiles the while and looks outran the tale
Their parted lips drank in.

Edwin. 'My master's daughter—
O for thine aid, Saavedra, to set forth
The dark luxuriance of those Eastern charms :
Fairness with ripeness reconciled : charms deep,
Charms deep and full tho' girlhood scarce had faded—
My master's daughter, earnest half, half sport,
It seem'd, oft met me. Such a maid before
Or in my dreams, or waking hours, I knew not,
('Twas in the mist of earlier days, perchance,
When Arthur's youth, with mine, was 'mong the Moors,)
Methought had met mine eyes. I cannot say,
For all was strange and wild.

With broken sounds
Of English utterance—but whence learn'd, she said
not—

Broken, yet clear : sweet tones, methought, tho' broken,
She turn'd my willing eyes where, one blue rim,
Ocean lay dark with hope and mystery.
It seem'd, she long had waited, in the thought
To fly her home, and found the wish now granted.
Then answering smiles and recognition aiding,
Our plot was soon prepared.

And now the boat
In the palmetto-grove, beneath the rock,

Swung ready : oars were out, and sails, half spread,
 Beat with desire. All things on Ada call'd,
 Yet lingering. And I thought, the rising fear
 Of danger, and discovery, haunting me,
 'She comes not, and she cares not : 'tis the freak
 Of reckless girlhood,'—angry thought ! yet ere
 The cloud of wrath around my temples curl'd,
 A gentle voice had summon'd me, and led
 Up cedarn alley, past the jasmine bush,
 That out on air its slumberous odours hung,
 Thro' latticed corridors—where one faint lamp
 Glean'd thro' the gauze-hung window. Sleep within
 Breathed tremulous in dim silence. Ada lean'd
 Half on the sill, and with one hand drew back
 The veil above : then on my neck her arm
 Dropp'd, as she said, 'My father,'—with a tone
 Breathing full tide of love, regretful love,
 That thro' sweet childhood's days ran back, and paused,
 And maiden hope, that would not brook repression.
 My looks turn'd on her, fearful so to read
 A failing purpose. In one long embrace,
 The first and last, her arms met mine : with tears
 And mingled sobs, the voice of loving weakness,
 That *must* confess itself, and seek an aid
 She would, or would not. 'Think not that with love,'
 He said, (half turn'd toward Blanche, reverted half,
 As tho' he spoke to th' interspace 'twixt her
 And Arthur)—'Think not that with love, dear friends,
 Such love as man feels once, and but for once,
 I met her lock'd embrace ; or that *her* heart
 Lay beating with aught more than the deep fears,
 Deep joys, of flight. I know not of her fate :
 Yet sure 'twas love, that nerved her.—

But my soul

Rose, and in words of settled firmness, told
 Of danger, that discover'd plans must breed,
 And of one dearer than a father's love,
 My brother, who awaited me. At this
 She started, as from dreaming—and with eyes
 Reverted oft, oft failing, downward led
 Our fourfold steps, and so the boat was gain'd.'
 —He paused : for round the circle, as they sat,
 Flash'd a responsive smile, that long repress'd,

Now struggled into daylight. With surprise,
As one chagrined, he knows not how, that feels
The central circle of the labyrinth
Thro' which the voice of friends had summon'd him,
Barr'd from his footsteps, and the while he hears
Light laughter and quick rustling feet around,
He added, 'Well; ye should have heard the tale,
A summer's tale, of Ada, and our flight,
And how she fled me, sudden: and the chase,
Long fruitless chase—thro' France. But I reserve
My words for calmer audience.'

Blanche threw out
An asking look on Arthur: but 'Not yet,
Not yet,' he sign'd, in playful earnestness,
Observed of Edwin.—And 'It must be so;
For such reserve, on such a morn as this,
No lesser cause suffices:—and he rose
Mastering himself to calm: then hastier steps
Within the thicket bore him.

And sweet Blanche,
Repentant of unseasonable smiles,
Went downcast thro' the garden; as in chase
Of one she found not.

'Tis fit time,' at last
The old man said; 'none fitter, we should tell
Where Ada's flight was stay'd, when from Algiers
Young Cupid's runaway, thro' France she went,
Provence, Auvergne, wild Brittany—to thee,
Mindful of earlier days, and promise given,
She scarce knew when. And some excuse the Fair
Herself, methinks, for flight itself, requires,
For unexplain'd desertion. Think not, Arthur,
My hasty-kindling friend, think not I blame
The delicate maiden mind, that shunn'd to break
Word of thy love, her hopes,—so long delay'd,
Uncertain long—to Edwin: who, in youth,
Knew not the pledge that bound her. But the hour
To lift the veil has reach'd us: who so fit
As thou to tell?'

Arthur. 'So would I; but the fear
Restrain'd me, lest the sight of all that bliss,
Bliss undeserved, which Heaven had stored for me—
(Excuse me, father! if I plead *his* cause,

Using the style he would)—should pierce his heart
 With thought of all he was, and all he hoped,
 In th' unforgotten days of youthfulness.
 —Whereto in answer, with a smile that breathed
 The ineffaceable sweetness of a life
 Calm'd by pure thoughts, the sire of Blanche replied :
 ' I know it ; I know it all. Ah, deem not Blanche
 (I know her heart—none better: who *should* better?)
 Indifferent, or forgetful, has received
 Our long-expected exile. 'Neath the calm
 Of that first greeting—'neath the words of mirth,
 (Oft our best aid in weakness)—lay the soul
 Fluttering and panting in that strong influx
 Of inexpressive bliss. 'Tis often so :
 These calm streams run the deepest. Edwin's heart
 Well match'd with hers, thou know'st—more quick
 in mood,
 E'en now perchance, with sudden jealousy
 Touch'd toward his brother—left so long with her
 For whom he cares to live : more self-tormenting,
 As less capacious of that vast reliance,
 Undoubting love, unfearing, woman's strength
 And weakness. Let us rise. Bring Ada forth :
 —Your brother with a brother's love will greet
 His southern fugitive : from her bright lips
 Fitliest will learn her story : and what else
 Woman, on woman's love most eloquent,
 A willing tongue in willing ears may pour.'

[*Exeunt.*

Edwin (alone). O treasure—lost, when found !

O sweetest most

When most, most lost ! How could I hope—and yet
 If any loved, she once :—mine own confess'd :
 Confess'd mine own : I cannot dare unthink it—
 That it should be—O God—that it should be so—
 That it should be so !—that the most beloved
 Should by the most beloved, save her alone !—
 —O curse ! that out of sweetest bitterest bringing,
 Hast waited on me long, and fall'n at length,
 After such sweetness known—after such hours !
 For was she not mine own—my love confess'd—
 At that last kiss—the dearest, still the last,
 When with bare tender feet, and long drawn stream

Of locks dishevell'd, thro' the dawn she came,
To bid farewell, that could not be farewell,
Before her love the tide of loving thoughts
And girlish fancy pouring—

Yet I see her :
Blanche, yet I see thee—recollection yet
Will not disown her treasures—as thou wast,
Child among children, when he first, and I
On that blind day of wrath, were brought to thee :
There as thou wast among thy youthful stores,
The maps, the pictured leaves :—each childly toy,
Each treasure—free for our delight display'd,
Orphans, and sad.

But O that hours like these
Had never been—or ever !—That delight
Had ne'er so jarr'd the balance of the soul,
The calmness of an unforeseeing heart,
Untried in bliss too blissful—or that Love
Had ta'en me by the hand, and led me up,
Raised step by step, to that still eminence
Where neither storm of passion, nor the mists
Of doubt, nor any frore indifference,
Violate the warm purpureal atmosphere,
And mar the everlasting smile of heaven !

But I must wander thro' the void of life
Alone—thrice orphan'd : love alone unchanged :
Unchanged :—yet so to me from earth shut out,
No longer portion'd with his loveliness.
Ah ! valleys—fields and valleys—ah ! dark glade,
Once peopled with the voiceful playfulness
Of those who thought them children—Love himself
A child among them—so it seem'd—and were not !
O vain regret—O mockery of tears !
O Love, why hast thou so deserted me !
Say, was it sin that I should love her so—
And did the sin deserve such punishment ?
Sweet sin, resolved in sorrow, such, so deep,
That e'en those fancy tells of—those who yet
Can weep their own eternal chastisement,
May mock my woe, that might find way thro' tears,
But knows the boasted comfort comfortless :—
O vain regret—O mockery of tears !

[A pause.]

He paused. The rush of song, from those within
 The sun-illumin'd veil of budding boughs,
 (Translucent green and amber:—leaf on leaf
 Inscribing tiny fans of pencill'd shade),
 Flooded the calm. To more considerate grief
 That anguish'd soul insensibly was strung:
 Till sadder tones of human utterance,
 The appeal of reason, and the pangs of thought,
 Th' inevitable burden, and the sting
 That happy memories bring,
 When Man recalls the vision of the Boy,
 With those unthinking lays, and accents rife
 In overbrimming joy,
 Blended the discords of our human life.

Edwin. Rich thy childhood's promise, dearest, with
 thine earlier years advancing:
 Rich its bright fulfilment, as the golden days pass on-
 ward glancing.
 When a child, I've often watch'd thee, with thy maiden
 thoughtlessness
 Love for love returning freely, in a sweet unconscio-
 ness.
 Like a fountain overflowing ceaselessly with pure de-
 light:
 Turning everything to brightness, robing it in cheerful
 light.
 Like an angel-presence, with thy lightning smiles and
 day-long gladness,
 Sunny smiles and radiant hair—no child of mortal gloom
 or sadness.
 Fearless for thine own sweet self, while all around were
 fearing for thee:
 Thought of danger at thy blithesome presence fled away
 before thee.
 Thou wast gayest of the gay, love; thou wast bravest
 of the brave:
 Young amongst the young and bright: but wise and
 thoughtful with the grave.
 Ah, that I from boyhood should have known and watch'd
 this living treasure!
 Ah, that I thro' countless days should here have placed
 my deepest pleasure!

Ah, that all should be in vain ! that I should see the
prize with sorrow !
Ah, that such a dreamful night of joy should wake to
such a morrow !

ADA, at some distance, singing.

How should we greet the friends we meet
Restored from long exile ?
With the joyous beat of tripping feet,
With garland and with smile ?

The joy suppress : the quiet breast,
The gentle words and few :
The faintly trembling hand show best
The loving heart and true.

Love alters not by time or spot,
By parting, or by meeting :—
Best sign of absence unforget,
Is that unalter'd greeting.

The sudden flush of drops that rush
Surprise or fear reveals :
Some hidden thought the conscious blush
Half tells and half reveals.

Love's eager eyes drink in the flush
For silent watching meetest :
The transient treasures of the blush
In his own hour are sweetest.

He heard, but reck'd not of the song :—so deep
The billows had gone o'er him. Yet the notes,
Rich in the ripen'd fulness of the South,
An old remember'd air of Moslem land,
Fez, or Marocco, wrought within his ear,
And touch'd the outer sense, that guards the soul
Within her secret chamber.

Up he started
As one in sleep, that knows not why, nor, waken'd,
Finds what had waked him.

Ada sought the spot,
Fearful, when Edwin fled :—and gathering up

Some scatter'd note-book fragments, that lay round,
Rejoin'd the rest, within the trellis shade
In earnest conclave seated.

'See!' she cried:

'I bring you traces of the fugitive:—
I fled him once: he me——' then blithesome first,
But soon with deepening voice, and eye downcast
That caught infection from the words she read,
And their fix'd earnest glances, Ada thus
Reveal'd the broken music of despair.

'I little thought, when first in youth I met thee,
Thou e'er wouldst be to me what now thou art:
That all the summon'd effort to forget thee
Could not efface thee from the heart of heart,
Since first I met thee.

'O bitter draught of sweetest recollection
That with each thought of thee the soul must drain!
Lost Eden, wither'd by the world's infection;
Soul, yielded up to waste herself in vain,
Since first I met thee.

'Thou art my second self:—where'er I wander,
Thy sad sweet presence with my journeying speeds;
And my fond heart has ever grown still fonder,
Tho' each new day, I know, new severance breeds
Since first I met thee.

'Thy form was by me on the path-seam'd mountains;
Thy presence in the green leaves of the glen;
Thy name was whisper'd in the rustling fountains;
Thy voice in evening gales again, again,
Since first I met thee.

'Where should I turn me? where should I betake me?
One reckless hour has spoil'd the golden year;
The flowers and fruits of love at once forsake me;
All things are bitterest that were then most dear
When first I met thee.'

A moment's pause—a stir—and as of old
Orestes, when Erinnys glared behind,
Went onwards aye, and knew not where he went,
So now came Edwin; so; then at the sight

Half-caught, of those he fled from, backward stept
Trembling.

But Blanche sprang forth, and drew him in,
With streaming locks, and eyes of fond request,
That look'd a volume of unutter'd words,
As—'Come; 'twas in our sport we thus deceived you :
Come; all is well : '—But he, yet blind with fears,
Put by the gentle hand, in act to flee ;
When Ada, lowly crouch'd at Arthur's feet,
Through happy tears smiled on him.

Edwin, there,
There where he stood, strong in the strength of youth,
Upon his darling bow'd : the lightning flash
Of recognition smiting all the soul
Irresistible :—one moment ;—then to wake
Untranced, enfranchised, Love without disguise
Assured in many blushes innocent :
All Paradise at once, and at her side
Regain'd : to wake upon the smile, that now,
Now once again, and struggling into day,
But beaming to full brightness, shone on eyes
Irradiate with clear love, and moisten'd glances.
O then with one long cry, that echo'd full
From boyhood, summing up in that deep breath
The music of the heaven-directed years,
He clasp'd her to himself ; one soul with his
Henceforth for ever. And

'O long, long sought—
Long sought, and lately won : light of the eyes,'
He murmur'd—'Heart's desire : mine only love :
Mine—in one word all happiness—my Blanche—
Look on me : faint not : lest this flood of life
On long drought pouring, should o'erbear itself,
Failing beneath its own deliciousness.
Look on me :—O thou flower, that long desired,
Long sigh'd for, long beheld, long clasp'd in dreaming,
Giv'st all thy drooping self to my embraces ;
Unclose the tender lids, that fall and float
On eyes that through the years have lighted me :
Unclose the crimson lips, that bar out love :
And crown him with the kisses, that *are* love,
The love of love—and to himself restore him :—
Once—once, again !'

And with the thought, the touch,
 Harmonious words went through him : or the notes
 Of some forgotten melody revived
 In th' exquisite crowning moment, and he said—

'And is it so, my love, at last,
 And is the treasure won ?
 The goal of many years attain'd,
 The very life begun ?
 And is the sun uprisen in strength,
 The dawn upon the dreaming ?
 Ah do I clasp my Love at length ?
 Ah is it truth or seeming ?

'Thro' many scenes my path has run,
 In many lands exiled :
 I walk'd thro' change that rose on change,
 And visions wavering wild :—
 And shifting ran Life's pageant by
 With shriek and scorn and flouting :—
 Could Love 'mid all Time's force deny,
 Or shun the shafts of doubting ?

'And many fair ones charm'd the soul
 At Beauty's feet to bow :
 And lavish Love unveil'd his sweets,
 And smiled as thou smilest now :—
 And thousand fancies touch'd the brain,
 And thoughts past thought's completing :—
 How should Love fixt and firm remain,
 Where all was fleet and fleeting ?

'Ah how, my Love !—I gaze on Thee,
 I read the riddle now :
 All maiden gladness on the lips,
 And thought upon the brow ;
 And halo gold above thine eyes,
 And Truth in glory seated :
 And smiles that pass in sweeter sighs,
 And tears of joy completed.

' Ah smiles—ah sighs—ah lips that so
The wanderer welcome in!
And tremble voiceless words of bliss,
And whisper doubt was sin!
I take the pledge of love regain'd;
I bow before the blessing:
The hope past hope of life attain'd
On thy sweet lips confessing.'

VII.

THYRSIS.

PASTORAL ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A CLERGYMAN,
FRIEND TO THE AUTHOR.

Ἀρχετε Σικελικαὶ τοῦ πένθεος ἄρχετε Μοῖσαι.

For such a loss—for such a loss—for him
Lost from our need: when storms ran high,
And lowering clouds and threat of winds were rife,
Snatch'd from the rudder and the noise of strife
Within another sky,
How should I find a due commensurate hymn?
How give such grief to failing words of woe?
—Grief hides herself from self:—from search of eyes
Trick'd in some vain disguise:
Sovereign of souls, dread Queen, no less
She wears a childly waywardness:
Within some valley low
And separate from the throng
She sits and weaves the song,
Fitting the rustic notes to present woe,
And to Sicilian echoes bids the requiem flow.

For he, too, was a Shepherd:—he thro' plains
Where, as of old, Cephissus, holy stream,
Ran warbled wanderings, and in Academe
Linger'd with Plato:—he, where Jordan flow'd,
Or Kedron, or Siloa, led the flock:
Or by the Stations of the Sorrowing Road:
Or where the bald bare Rock
Record of sacrifice retains,
Crown'd with the trace of high immortal pains.
And they look'd up and at his hand were fed,
And follow'd where he led.

Nor when in grief he bow'd the reverent head,
 And wept affection fled,
 From life's companionship too soon exiled,
 Did the chief Shepherd aught relax his care,
 A prey to sorrow wild,
 Or thoughts too consecrate to things that were.
 For still the flock received his primal care :
 Whether within the circuit of the land
 Some meadow-plague by summer's sun was nurst,
 Or spring-tide of the year :—
 Or whether in hot youth, and past command,
 O'er fence and pale they sought less hallow'd cheer,
 On earth's waste wilderness to pant and thirst,
 And confident in too-confiding youth.
 Within the verge of truth,
 As best the Shepherd knew, he led them back,
 And showed the surer track :
 And well might point the way, who traced it first.

Nor when the sounds of war
 And echoes from the perilous world without
 Within Arcadia rang, and wide and far
 Startled the shepherds : could he share the doubt
 Glooming upon their souls, unnerved, unmann'd,
 Deaf to the warning oracles of the land.
 But call'd his friends, and on them breathed his soul ;
 And order'd so the whole
 In just array to stand
 With courteous love, and provident command.

Alas ! for him, and more alas ! for us,
 The flock deserted thus !
 For soon a wasting sickness, and the weight
 And weariness of life bore Thyrsis down.
 And in retired valleys, where the wind
 Moan'd landward from south seas, to death resign'd,
 Hid from their sight he loved, he sate :
 Waiting the well-won crown
 To faithful rulers by just laws assign'd.
 Nor when the touch of Fate
 Was on thee, didst thou swerve from that high mood
 Of cheerful labour in the cause of good,
 From that high mood of faith in coming joy :—

Nor did the flock the less thy care employ,
Nor thy soul's strength abate.

—So joy for thee : but grief the more for us,
The flock deserted thus !
Who should efface such loss—and who repair ?
Not without pain, not without care,
We view the portents of the future shine—
For as the vine is honour'd among trees,
As the full grapes bring honour to the vine,
So thou wast honour and defence to thine.
Now since thy soul from sorrow found release,
Favonian gales and summer cease,
And Pales and Apollo leave the fields.
For what we gave (full promise) to the fields,
Unhappy tares and fruitless weeds appear ;
The mead no more the violet may rear,
No more narcissus yields ;
But darnel and the thorny thistle rise :—
In vain with withering leaves we strew the pall ;
In vain on Thyrsis in our songs we call ;
We view the pasture with averted eyes,
And winter on the fields :—
Now what thou wert to us we know the more,
And so thy loss deplore.

VIII.

FROM SAPPHO. (I)

HYMN TO APHRODITÉ.

GOLDEN-THRONED beyond the sky,
 Jove-born Immortality :
 Hear and heal a suppliant's pain :
 Let not love be love in vain !

Come, as once to Love's imploring
 Accents of a maid's adoring,
 Wafted 'neath the golden dome
 Bore thee from thy father's home ;

When far off thy coming glow'd,
 Whirling down th' ætherial road,
 On thy dove-drawn progress glancing,
 'Mid the light of wings advancing ;

And at once the radiant hue
 Of immortal smiles I knew ;
 Heard the voice of reassurance
 Ask the tale of love's endurance :—

' Why such prayer ? And who for thee,
 Sappho, should be touch'd by me ;
 Passion-charm'd in frenzy strong—
 Who hath wrought my Sappho wrong ?

' —Soon for flight pursuit wilt find,
 Proffer'd gifts for gifts declined ;
 Soon, thro' long reluctance earn'd,
 Love refused be Love return'd.'

—To thy suppliant so returning,
 Consummate a maiden's yearning :
 Love from deep despair set free,
 Championing to victory !

IX.

FROM SAPPHO. (II)

THE BRIDAL.

— ὦ κάλα ὦ χαρίεσσα —

HIGH lift the beams of the chamber,
 Workmen, on high ;
 Like Arés in step comes the Bridegroom ;
 Like him of the song of Terpander,
 Like him in majesty.

—O fair—O sweet !
 As the sweet apple blooms high on the bough,
 High on the highest ; forgot of the gatherers :
 So Thou :—
 Yet not so : nor forgot of the gatherers ;
 High o'er their reach in the golden air,
 —O sweet—O fair !

FROM ALKMAN.

NIGHT SCENE.

SLEEP mountain-tops and ravines,
Sleep headland and torrent ;
Sleep what dark earth bears on her bosom,
Green leaves and insects ;
Beasts in the den and bees in their families ;
Monsters in depths of the violet sea :
Sleeps every bird,
 Folding the long wings to slumber.

XL.

FROM SIMONIDES.

ARETÉ.

THERE is a song,
That on high rocks, bright, inaccessible,
Girt with the circling dance, her holy throng,
Doth Virtue dwell :—
Nor on that throne
Seen of all human kind : by him alone,
Heart-pierced in soul-corroding toil, and so
To height of perfect Manhood climbing slow :
—By him alone.

XII.

FROM EURIPIDES.

CHORUS IN MEDEA.

Corinthian women implore Medea to spare her children, and not
carry the pollution of guilt to Athens.

STROPHE A

CHILDREN of Erechtheus' line,
Heaven-descended race divine;
Blest as none are blest but ye,
Nursed on far-famed wisdom free,
In that holy seat of song,
Land inviolate of wrong:
Moving soft thro' lucent air
Down the violet valleys, where
The Pierian Muses fair
Native on Ionian shore
Golden-hair'd Harmonia bore:—

ANTISTROPHE A

—Where, they sing, Cythéré first
By Cephísus cool'd her thirst;
Breathing then the fields to bless
Heaven-sweet gales of gentleness.
While from sunny locks she showers
Fragrant wreaths of roseate flowers;
And her many Loves, that share
Wisdom's throne, as pure, as fair,
To the sacred soil repair;
Man to Manhood's glory raising;
Virtue with new virtue gracing.

STROPHE B

Holy city—holy shore—
Holy streams—the day deplore :—
How should ye Medea bless,
Welcoming such murderess ?
Mother stain'd with infant gore :—
—By thyself we thee implore,
Think, from such pollution free,
All thy children are to thee !
Suppliant at thy knees we press—
Spare that infant littleness !

ANTISTROPHE B

Can the soul such fury share ?
Mother's hands such horror dare ?
Mother's lips the crime confess ?
Mother's heart such savageness ?
Can thine eyes thy children see
Tearless o'er their agony ?
—No—not so—not so—when they
At thy knees for mercy pray !
Ere thy hand their blood confess,
Spare that infant piteousness !

XIII.

FROM AN ATHENIAN SONG:

IN HONOUR OF HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGEITON.

MYRTLE-WREATHED my sword I wave,
As of yore the brothers brave,
When the tyrant sank, and ye
Athens blest with liberty.

Loved Harmodius ! art not dead !
To the blessed isles hast sped :
Where Achilles fleet and fair
And the son of Tydeus are.

Myrtle-wreathed my sword I wave,
As of yore the brothers brave
'Mid the sacrificial crew
By the shrine Hipparchus slew.

Aye on earth your names will shine,
Brothers brave, beloved, divine ;
Since the tyrant sank, and ye
Athens blest with liberty.

•

XIV.

FROM CATULLUS. (I)

TO LESBIA'S SPARROW.

SPARROW, my delight's delight,
Bosom-cradled playmate bright,
Seize her finger in thy bill,
Privileged to bite at will :
First to share, thrice-envied lot,
Some dear game, I know not what,
Framed to soothe my beauty bright,
Passion-rack'd in deep delight.
—Could I hold such sport with thee,
It were sure relief to me ;
Trifle sure : yet trifles laid
On the course a Princess stay'd ;
Bribed to yield herself the prize,
Love's reluctant sacrifice !

XV.

FROM CATULLUS. (II)

 TO LESBIA.

LIVE we, love we, Lesbia mine :—
 Graver counsels we decline ;
 Prizing at a farthing's price
 Worn-out sages' chill advice.
 Suns may set and suns rise burning ;
 Life's short day sees no returning,
 Doom'd henceforth of Fate to keep
 One sure everlasting sleep.
 —Come a thousand kisses pour :
 Add a hundred to the store ;
 Then a thousand thousand more ;
 Let the count past counting go,
 Lest our own delights we know :
 Lest some ill eye scan our blessings,
 Envyng Love's untired caressings.

XVI.

FROM CATULLUS. (III)

TO CAPE SIRMIO.

*λέμενος καὶ καπνὸν ἀποθρώσκοντα νοῆσαι
ἥς γαίης, Σανέειν ἱμείρεται . . .*

SIRMIO, darling of all capes that lie
Isled in either ocean quietly :
Darling of all islands thro' the sea,
With how deep a joy I turn to thee !
So late labouring o'er Bithynia's plain,
Scarce I think I see thee yet again.
—O what sweeter than toils closed—and so,
When the soul lays down the weight and woe
Worn abroad,—and we are home, and blest,
On that oft-remember'd couch at rest !
All we gain from all—enough—and more !—
—Hail, fair Sirmio, hail thy lord ashore—
Smile, sweet lake, through liquid lines of foam ;
Laugh, whatever laughters haunt my home !

XVII.

FROM HORACE.

 BOOK I. ODE XXIII.

TO CHLOE.

~~Like~~ the fawn you flee me, child,
 When she seeks thro' mountains wild,
 Startled seeks her dam, and sees
 Foolish fears in winds and trees.

Sighs that coming springtide heaves
 Shuddering thro' the pensile leaves :
 Lizards green that stir the brake,
 Heart and knees to trembling wake.

—Not as lions rend the prey,
 Chloé, Love comes not as they ;
 Calls thee now from mother's eyes :
 In the child the maiden spies.

XVIII.

THE FALL OF PAGANISM.

I.

FAUNUS' voice upon the mountains
 In long hollow vales I hear :
 Faunus weeps his glades and fountains,
 Sighs o'er each returning year.
 Each returning year his altars
 Sink and moulder in decay :
 For the faith of ages falters,
 Fading soft from earth away.

II.

'Earth, fair earth, my chosen dwelling,
 I am passing from thy sight ;
 Pale as mists at morn upswelling
 Waste within the noonday light.
 Earth, fair earth, I sigh to lose thee,
 For I love thy beauty well :
 How can gods do aught but choose thee,
 Nature's pleasant citadel ?

III.

'In the days of young creation,
 Man beheld thine awful face :
 Eyes were sunk in adoration,
 Faith inspired her infant race :—
 Call'd from Dreamland's shadowy portals,
 Forth I came to man's abodes ;
 Shaped by will of eager mortals,
 Mid the horror of the woods.

IV.

'Where through beechen stems are glancing
Arrowy streams of levell'd light :
Where the pine-tree tops are dancing
On Cylléné's feathery height ;
Where Laverna's oaks are brooding
O'er the vaults of noon-day shade,
Hearts adored me, man implored me,
Guardian of the phantom glade.

V.

'Earth, fair earth, once spirit-haunted
In the days of youthful man,
Ere thy youngest child had vaunted
He his mother's heart could scan :
Veil the light of dear-bought reason :
Save thy sons from fruitless pain :
Grant them childhood's trustful season :
Give them back their youth again.

VI.

'Why should man do aught but wonder,
Why thy secrets hope to scan ?
What has rent the links asunder
That united thee to man ?
Whence the voice of idle treason
'Gainst the glories of thy reign ?
Why should Faith give place to Reason !—
—Give them back their youth again.

VII.

'Still the white-clad train before me
Through the vale in chorus winds :
Village hearts may yet adore me
In the faith of simple minds.
Earth ! through all thy changes save them
From the weight of reason's chain :
Let no heartless creed enslave them :
Give them back their youth again.'

XIX.

ON READING THEOCRITUS.

I.

A THRILL comes o'er us when we view the page
 Character'd with the forms of ancient speech ;
 Gray world-worn fragments of Man's heritage
 The years have spared to aid us and to teach.
 Where are the hands that framed these golden lines,
 Rich in the fragrance of o'erwhelming love ;
 The passionate sweetness of the tuberose bells :
 Sweetness, that song refines
 Till earth-born passion spreads her wing above,
 And Venus yields her to her own sweet spells ?

II.

The soul of the Sicilian lives in song :
 His name yet flits among the mouths of men :
 His dust is heap'd amidst the nameless throng,
 Who laugh'd, and wept, and smiled, and wept again,
 Man's common lot, as childhood's. Where are they ?
 They are incorporate with the teeming earth,
 Or blown on currents of the viewless air :—
 They are not less a prey
 To darkness, than the Bard's own tuneful birth,
 One death with Daphnis and Adonis share.

III.

Where are the sun-brown shepherds ? Where the kine
 That low'd their music to those azure skies ?
 The youthful bands that march'd in order'd line,
 To deck them for the songful sacrifice ?

The white-wall'd towns of the three-corner'd Isle?
 The nodding plumage of the Dorian crest?
 The long-drawn annals of a nation's strife?
 —The snow-topt lava pile
 Still dusks with far-thrown shade the wheat-clad west;
 She quickens not her dead to second life.

IV.

Alas, that it must be so! And alas
 That one long Present sums not human life:
 That love must wither as the summer grass,
 Blank silence overhush heroic strife!
 —Let Nature work her will on glade and field,
 Dismantling the green honours of their pride,
 And riot in the ravening wilderness:
 These to her sway we yield:—
 We bid her turn her wrath from man aside,
 Sparing him in her wasteful wantonness.

V.

We thread the thrilling leaves of ancient song,
 High resonant of dance, of wine, of gladness,
 By mirth not uncongenial borne along;
 But soon gay thoughts dissolve themselves in sadness:
 The visions of the mighty dead are here;
 Their voices haunt their own immortal lays;
 And long-lost faces o'er the pages gleam.
 Their presences are near:—
 We fail before the spectres that we raise,
 The thronging phantoms of a day-tide dream.

XX.

THE BIRTH OF ART.

INTRODUCTION.

TO B. J.

IN happy days—long past, you recollect them,
 We held discourse, dear Friend, on art and verse:
 What style, what metre, fitting as a robe
 The naked thought beneath, endrapping it
 In thousand-fold expression—adding grace
 Where it received it—best might suit the modes
 And giddy-paced invention of our age:
 While talk of summer days, and Wales, and all
 The flashing glories of her torrent-depths
 Mingled its freshness.

And one while 'twas said,
 That 'deepest streams run clearest:' and, again,
 Both voting that deep matter and deep thought
 Wedded in verse, for studious readers call'd,
 And dutiful attention—'twas agreed
 'Transparent rills are shallow:' till, between
 These seeming discrepancies, Truth, who sits
 'Twixt poles of endless severance, yet the same,
 (You told us), found her station.

And we said,
 'Thoughts differ in degree, no less than kind.
 There is no one Procrustean bed for all:
 Things hang not in the heavy dock-yard scales,
 But most hair-balanced: 'tis the difficult mean,
 Their evanescent meeting-point, we aim at.
 Some thoughts, like characters, themselves unfold,
 Themselves their own interpreters: of such
 The mass of verse is fashion'd.'

'Some,' you said,
 (And push'd the smouldering brands that fronted us
 Together to one cone of whiter heat,
 Your meditative habit)—'Some, as erst
 That Eleusinian Temple, where within
 The mysteries of earth were shadow'd forth,
 With pictured porch and outwork was fenced round,—
 For Prologue, by the reader's self set forth,
 In studious preparation—or built up
 By him that frames the story, call aloud :—
 Then most, if e'er the records of past time
 Are summon'd forth their essence to give up,
 Rich concentration :—So the stream of thought
 In deep and equable lucidity
 Flows undisturb'd, in bright allurements strong
 To tempt th' onlooker, who within its depths
 Sees his own features glass'd, with headlong plunge
 To entrust him to those waters, and so float
 Bathed in the currents of the murmurous song'.
 —And I—(for Art, that in the present fades,
 Had once a splendour and an empery
 To sway the hearts of men)—would here set forth
 Her birth, and first derival ; not from aught
 That yet survives in sculptured majesty,
 Or glows in picture,—from the principles
 And canons of the beautiful, deduced ;—
 But from the course of her own lordly tale
 And history develop'd : how by need
 Of all-inventing man, and fond requirement,
 She sprang to light—then faded : as the rose
 On morning clouds, that first the sun calls forth,
 And then effaces.

So I launch the song,
 That asks forbearance, and the serious gaze
 Of bending studiousness.

And if from thee,
 O thee alone, such favour I should win,
 I count my aim accomplish'd—the reward
 That o'er-rewards the task—O, who would wish
 Whate'er the toil, the purpose of the race,
 More than th' award of justice, when her throne
 Is shared with Love and Wisdom—co-assessors ?

THE BIRTH OF ART.

I.

Not in thine infant season,
 Fair lordly mother of mankind, great Earth;
 Not in thy sober time of conscious reason,
 Had thy too short-lived daughter, Art, her birth:—
 But ere the splendours of thy youthful prime
 Were yet unpurpled in the hue
 That tracks the whitening hand of Time,
 To her swift perfectness she grew.
 For then Earth cast her glances round,
 And saw the freshness of her youth
 In fateful limits cabin'd, closed, and bound,
 Her soaring pinions cut and chain'd:
 Chain'd by stern and serious Truth,
 So long desired, and now so deeply gain'd:
 To stay the sense of that too-conscious pain,
 Art gave her back her youth again.

II.

Alas for that bright morning
 When the sore labour of man's o'erstrain'd wit,
 To heal the faith that reason blights with scorning,
 To know his being and to fathom it,
 Lay hidden from his joyous infant soul!
 Flush'd with a brimming sense of life,
 His eager eye inform'd the whole
 With that which in himself was rife:
 Deep soul—glad heart—the glance—the tone
 And spirit that moved his pliant limbs.
 Echo! thy voice—thine own—yet not thine own—
 Down long Ionian vales rang out,
 Resonant with festive hymns;

Th' adoring dance ; the tuneful measured shout :—
 Man woke the living rocks with votive lays :
 The living rocks gave back their praise.

III.

No sculptured grace was needed
 To image the great Gods, clear seen around :
 Not yet to upper air had Zeus receded :
 Gods walk'd this earth—earth yet was hallow'd
 ground.
 Was not great Pan abroad upon the hills ?
 And eager-eyed, while day declines,
 To chase the Nymphs 'long vales and rills,
 Lyæus hid in leafy vines ?
 Deméter cheer'd the conscious Earth,
 Smiling : with one who gather'd flowers,
 Bright in the grace of a celestial birth,
 Her yet untouch'd Persephoné :
 Weave the dance, immortal Hours !
 Trip thro' fair night and day with order'd glee :
 Young Phoebus' step is in the noontide glen :
 Manlike he mingles among men.

IV.

But Time knows no delaying :
 Earth's freshness pales : the glory fades and dies :
 Unconscious soon, some inner law obeying,
 Man takes the measure of the worlds and skies.
 Argo ! thine oars are out—thy sails unfurl'd,
 Earth's limits fly before thy prow ;
 Man maps the spaces of the world,
 Wild rocks and woods before him bow.
 The God fades off from stream and hill,
 From sun, from sky, from night, from day :
 The stars whirl on around us, calm and still :—
 All things are bound by Fate's decree,
 Inborn laws all things obey,
 And we are circled by necessity.
 Gift piled on gift—prayer link'd to prayer, are vain ;
 Void utterance of unheard pain.

V.

But for his consolation,
Man turns to busy life, and rests him there :
That half-unconscious sense of desolation
O'ermaster'd by the days' successive care.
Lo, fretted earth yields up her pleasant spoil ;
Lo, thick the white-wall'd cities rise ;
Proud roofs, the sheltering prize of toil,
Bar out his childhood's deities.
High-fated slave, tho' lord of earth,
Her elements admit his away :
Yet life is but a gleam 'twixt death and birth—
A weary race—a pilgrimage
O'er a half forgotten way :—
Fain would he know his hidden heritage ;
Fain would instinctive Faith, with clouded eyes,
Pierce the dim mist that veils her skies.

VI.

Now, self-reveal'd in glory,
In eye-commanding grace, that wins and sways,
Enchantress Art display'd Man's earlier story,
Clad in the splendour of forgotten days.
The phantom Gods of his creative youth
Bow'd to the summons of her spell ;
Came imaged forth, in sterner truth,
In visible shape henceforth to dwell.
In calm and voiceless majesty
Man framed the Gods of his own thought,
The self-made visions of an eager eye.
High o'er the azure-trembling brine,
Hundred-handed labour wrought
The many-column'd splendour of the shrine.
Hark ! the long echoes of th' exulting strain,
The Gods inhabit earth again !

VII.

The wanderers' feet delaying
In the green shady chasms of sun-proof glens,
Or by the run of babbling streamlets straying,
Or the dark root-fringed depth of mountain dens
Are fixt in adoration : glad they lend

The flexure of a willing knee,
 While heart and limb, due homage, bend
 To the white-sculptur'd majesty.
 The many-colour'd lines on frieze
 And vantage-coigne high deeds display
 Of those who fought to gain Elysian ease,
 The hero-links of earth and sky:—
 Shout! brave hearts, for well ye may:
 Art has charm'd back the Gods of infancy;
 No more their forms lie veil'd from mortal ken:—
 Art has restored the Gods to men.

VIII.

But O! too-transient treasure—
 Treasure once lost, and ne'er again returning:
 Would thou wert yet with us in thy full measure!
 Are we not for a hidden something yearning,
 An inexpressive sense of lost delight?
 Toil sinks 'neath his own fever'd weight:
 A day-long care: a wakeful night:
 Wealth leaves the soul insatiate:
 Man cries for peace, and finds it not:
 Sick with the mystery of the earth—
 The Future felt—the Past not all forgot:—
 Where is the power, whose spell of yore
 Read the riddle of our birth?
 Return—return—our vanish'd hopes restore;
 Man craves thine aid, from Faith too long exiled,
 And would again be as a Child.

THE BIRTH OF ART.

EPILOGUE.

So take the song. And if a fond regret
 For unreturning days of youth and freshness
 And those instinctive motions of belief
 That mark a nation's childhood, cast a tone
 O'er words not idly chosen, blame not, Friend,
 The conscious partial utterance.

All have known—

Save those, at either pole of truth congeal'd
 In rigid lifelessness—self-charter'd slaves
 To blind mechanical consistency—
 The balanced pulses of the soul within :
 Magnetic oscillations : thoughts that dip
 To Past or Future :—most in those, perchance,
 Who sum their strength up for the present day
 In quiet hopefulness.

The master-souls—

He—and that other, who took up his robe,
 And gave the annals of imperial Rome
 A fame undying as the wars of Greece,
 Athens, and Sparta—said ' Man differs not
 From man in essence : 'tis the lesson learnt
 From History, best studied : ' and, again,
 ' There is a circle in all things, and life
 In seasonable order, with the year
 Turns and returns.'—There is a chain in all
 That links us to Futurity : the Past
 Is born again among us.

And as those
Whose oft reverted gaze, while journeying on
Feeds on the thoughtful distance, till a hope
Springs unrepress'd, that in the goal they seek
Their starting-point is mirror'd: so unblamed
The wish may rise, that by no idle spells
Of servile imitation, life recall'd
Might reimbreathe the Past, and bring her down
With gifts to heal our failings, nor averse
From present aspirations, thence,—where now
Unmoved in graceful lifelessness, she sits,
Pedestal'd high in sculptured majesty.

XXI.

THE SCULPTOR.

I.

PART of the all-pervading Whole,
 Spirit of Life, descend before me;
 Art, breathe thyself within my soul,
 Fling thine halo radiance o'er me:
 So thou wouldst embodied be,
 Thou must yield thyself to me.

II.

Thou art Spirit, thou art Thought,
 Unalloy'd æthereal Life:
 All thy notes to concord wrought,
 Harmony condensed from strife;
 Circling orb, that knows no pause,
 Self restrain'd by inborn laws.

III.

I am framed of mortal mould,
 Yet my soul in thee has part;
 Let this flesh thy spirit enfold:
 Man thee with a human heart;
 —Would he fain on earth descend,
 Man with men the God must blend.

IV.

Be my hand's sure guiding nerve;
 I will image forth thy soul:
 All unconsciously the curve
 'Neath the steel will bend and roll:
 Till the godlike form conceal'd
 From the block stand forth reveal'd.

V.

In that form shall I, delighted,
See thee with myself combined :
See thy fleeting soul united
To the work of human mind.
Art and Man for aye will bide
In that perfect Form allied.

XXII.

THE CHRISTIAN ARTIST.

I.

LORD of Art and Lord of Nature,
 Lo, I yield myself to Thee :—
 Grant Thine own creative creature
 Inward eyes the Truth to see.
 I await Thy sure command :
 Guide my soul, and nerve my hand.

II.

Thou art Beauty : Thou art Life :
 Thou art Strength, and Thou art Rest :
 Chain the elements from strife :
 Lawless impulses arrest.
 Bounded by th' eternal Line
 Let the Parts in One combine.

III.

Thou beneath Thy creatures hid,
 Art the meaning of the world.
 Man th' emblazon'd truths may read
 When Thy banner flames unfurl'd.
 Grant him Love, and Strength, and Grace,
 To endure Thine unveil'd face.

IV.

Let the Form, unconscious flowing,
 Paint itself before the sight.
 Thou Thy guiding grace bestowing,
 Lead'st the plastic hand aright.
 Man alone is truly free
 When he lies enslaved to Thee.

XXIII.

THE BURIAL OF ST. CATHERINE,

CARRIED BY ANGELS TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI.

THEY bore her from the ruby West.
 The roseate silver of their wings,
 As on the rushing convoy springs,
 Dies down within the gray dark East.

They bore her from the fading West,
 Fair martyr-maid, brave heart and true,
 Through mist-white spaces gem'd with dew
 Within her dew-cool couch to rest.

Where, struck through lapping folds of cloud,
 The splintery peak dark-moisten'd gleams,
 High o'er the parting of the streams,
 They wrapt her in her rock-hewn shroud.

For one last gaze their Angel eyes
 Are bow'd upon the martyr-maid.
 She sleeps within the gray cool shade :
 The eddying mist around her flies.

The tearful mist around her flies.
 The Sun strikes sudden through the white:
 The dewy spaces swim with light,
 And all is glory where she lies.

XXIV.

FLORICE AND BLANCHEFLEUR.

(FRAGMENT.)

THROUGH the desert grim and wild
 Rode the solitary Child :
 I wis it had been dark and drear,
 E'en beneath the noonday clear.
 From the depths of the murk around
 Came no hint of earthly sound,
 Save the rushing, hoarse and low,
 Where rocks held back a torrent's flow.
 —Had he to cowardice resign'd him,
 That with the Cross the Youth thrice sign'd him ?
 Was it from fear as on he trod
 That thrice he breathed the name of God ?
 Or was it trustful lowliness,
 Or touch of natural piety ?—
 —Lo ! as his tongue had found release,
 Through the dark air, fresh and free,
 Unbid, an old-remember'd strain
 From his lips rang forth again.

' Let me rest on thoughts of Thee,
 Love ! as on the heaving sea :
 If to dreams my heart resigning,
 Yet on thee alone reclining.

' On the thought of thy sweet eyes,
 Downcast smiles, and low replies :
 On that bliss I first feel now,
 Thine am I, and mine art Thou :—

'In that inner vision blest,
On the depths of Love I rest:
On his low melodious sea,
Lull'd to sleep by thoughts of thee.'

A moment's pause: anon the strain
From his lips burst forth again:—

'Lily Flowers, in summer blooming,
Life and strength with growth resuming,
Yet hang down their heads in Spring,
Ere their final blossoming.

'So my glad heart, though the morrow
I shall see her, with a sorrow,
Some I know not what, is laden,
E'en so near the long-sought maiden.'

XXV.

DANTE TO BEATRICE.

I.



I.

FAIR Flower, long sought, for thy dear self I love thee :
 Through world or star there's none I prize above thee :
 From childhood never have I ceased to sigh for thee :
 When thou art gone, I willingly would die for thee.

II.

But, ah! that tears and prayers, my Love, could gain
 thee :
 Loosing the dread that I may ne'er attain thee :
 The dread that aye hangs o'er me when I view thee :
 Trembling to lose thee, trembling still to woo thee.

III.

How can I leave thee, how can I forget thee ?
 Ever in past years tremblingly I met thee :
 For fearful joy, sweet sadness, hover'd near thee :
 Love had cast spells that made my young heart fear
 thee.

IV.

Now joys and griefs too deep for words surround thee :
 And when I see thee, fear throws silence round thee :
 —Yet, O ! love-silence, as when first I met thee :—
 How can I leave thee : how can I forget thee ?

XXVI.

DANTE TO BEATRICE.

II.

'Quomodo sedet sola Civitas.'

Vita Nuova.

WHEN the bright city
 Lost thee, the fairest
 Gem from her crown was torn,
 Brightest and rarest.

Weep, Santa Fiore,
 Weep in thy splendour:
 Gone is thy fair flower,
 Graceful and tender.

Sigh, fair Lungarno,
 Sun-glist'ning brightly:
 Ne'er shall those feet go by,
 Treading thee lightly.

Weep through thy lingering stream,
 Weep, ancient River:
 Ne'er shall her form, imaged
 In thy wave, quiver.

Weep, lofty Fésolo,
 Weep, ancient towers:
 Ne'er shall she wander more
 Through your vine-bowers.

—Shine on, fair city :
Shine, dome and steeple :
Murmur, sweet lingering stream :
Sing, joyous people.

O with thine image
Rises old sadness :
Sweet thoughts of days gone by :
Echoes of gladness

XXVII.

THE JUDAS KISS.

—esser baciato da cotanto amante—

THY lips and mine were tremblingly united :—
 That day—that hour—that instant—yet are mine ;
 Eternity I joyfully resign,
 Eternity and Heaven unaffrighted—
 My all thus summ'd and gather'd :—I am thine.

That instant ! Fool ! within that instant, ages,
 A heap'd and stored eternity went by.
 I felt 'twould be so ; knew the hour was nigh :—
 The mist that gather'd o'er the glowing pages
 Foretold Love's full sunrise approaching high.

If there be shame, exultingly I share it :
 Let Love's own glory light me to the shade.
 Come woe—come death—I hail them undismay'd.
 Let Death bring what he will :—thrice-blest I bear it,
 To such betrayer by myself betray'd.

Let Death work what he will :—Ah, fool !—Affection
 Recks not of death : dies but to live again.
 He consecrates the grave : he bursts the chain.
 The death of Love prepares Love's resurrection :
 —They share the triumph who embrace the pain.

FRANCESCA.

XXVIII.

ROMANCE.

—‘Call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold.’—

PART I.

I.

‘STAY, gallant youth, thy courser stay,
In Langdale Halls content to dwell;
And take thy harp, and sing the lay,
That won thee thy sweet Christabel.’

II.

—‘What for should I my courser stay;
What for should I in Langdale dwell;
And take the harp, and sing the lay,
That speaks of vanish’d Christabel?’

III.

‘O there is truth on nurse’s lips,
And foresight in the breast of age:
The lips her lips have touch’d so oft;
The breast her baby cradle soft,
And slumber’s anchorage.

IV.

‘For she no more thy scarf shall bind,
To deck thee for the wars with weeping;
No more her bower with roses wind,
And greet thee with a rosy greeting.

V.

'Then stay, fair youth, thy courser stay,
 In Langdale Halls content to dwell.
 Youth comforts Age : sole comfort left
 To father of his child bereft,
 The father of thy Christabel.'

VI.

—'None dearer hold her Sire than I;
 Yet past Sir Leoline I prize her:
 The words of Age are Wisdom's words,
 And yet the lips of Love are wiser.'

VII.

'Last night beyond the gate I stray'd;
 I stood beneath the old oak tree:
 I look'd in silence on the stars,
 And the silent stars look'd down on me.'

VIII.

'I thought of vanish'd Christabel,
 And pray'd sweet Mary grant a sign:—
 —Two eyes slid downward from the stars;
 The eyes of Lady Geraldine.'

IX.

'The keen eyes rested in the tree;
 A voice came forth from blank below:
 "Would'st see thy vanish'd love again,
 —Seek her in Breton Charliot."

X.

"The many chamber'd castle-walls
 For bashful maid are fitting coverts;
 Seek out the room where last she slept,
 And love shall sleep the sleep of lovers."

XI.

'Now forth to castled Charliot !'
 —The good gray steed neigh'd proud and high ;
 The bugle blew, the flint sparks flew ;
 God speed the gallant and the true
 To triumph or to die !

PART II.

I.

NURSE Agnes stood in Langdale gate :
 She heard young Bracy go :
 For young Bracy's sake and Sir Leoline's,
 A prayer she whispers low.

II.

Sir Leoline lay at the gates of death,
 Nor pray'd, nor spoke, nor stirr'd :
 Nor save by Agnes' trembling ear,
 His breathing could be heard.

III.

She hears his breathing faint and slow,
 She says 'God's will be done :
 But I have lost a son to-day,
 And he has lost a son.

IV.

'For I too pray'd to Mary Queen,
 And I beheld a sign :
 And on the midnight of mine eyes
 Came Lady Geraldine.

V.

'She cursed thee, O Sir Leoline,
 She cursed thy daughter sweet :
 She cursed the gallant and the bold :
 She bade him seek the maiden meek
 Lies buried in the mould.

VI.

'She bade him go to Charliot,
She laugh'd that he should go:
For he should die with foul fiends by,
And by the wall lie low:
Chill and bare to midnight air,
For she would work him woe;
And she would go to Charliot
And laugh to meet him there.'

VII.

She thought of vanish'd Christabel,
She cursed the jealous angry spell,
(And cross'd herself with holy sign);
That wrought so on the aged knight,
When, to work out her fiendish spite
He gave his own true daughter bright
A prey to Lady Geraldine.

VIII.

Nurse Agnes turned to Sir Leoline;
She said: he slumbers calm and deep:
On the carven bench she sate her low,
And dreams were with her in her sleep.

IX.

A weary way, a weary way,
She saw the gallant Bracy go:
She saw him stand on Thames' fair strand,
She saw him touch the southern land,
And on to Breton Charliot.

X.

A weary way, a dreary road:
A dun-wove cloud of driving snow:
By forest hoar, by rivers froze,
O'er ice that hung from shore to shore,
While deep beneath the currents pour,
And still o'erhead where'er he sped,
Two drifting seams of azure go.

XI.

By dark Rouen, by Lisieux,
 By Caen-sur-Orne and gray Bayeux ;
 Avranches, and where the holy Mount
 Frowns on Saint Malo strand :
 And where o'er Merlin's wizard fount,
 Enwreathed along the valley stand
 The giant glades of Brocelyande.

XII.

Now, stain'd upon an amber sky,
 The blackening turrets he can spy,
 Tall warders of the waste afar ;
 Grim giant terrors of the foe,
 As o'er Roannez' plain they go,
 And pride of wild Armorica.

 PART III.

I.

THRO' many-chamber'd Charliot
 He wanders high, he wanders low,
 Thro' echoing hall and wizard cell ;
 Nine times pacing, high and low,
 Nor any trace of Christabel.

II.

Each door a frame of claspéd oak :
 Each narrow casement iron-barr'd :
 Each wall a height of tapestry'd rags :
 Each floor a square of sounding flags :
 ' Sure gentle maid was never laid
 On couch so harsh and hard.'

III.

And here he sees a silken braid,
 And here a golden whistle ;
 And here a fragrant necklace laid
 Beneath a blazon'd missal.

IV.

But when with quicken'd quest again
The wizard cells he paces,
His spell-bewilder'd eyes in vain
Demand the fancied traces.

V.

As one that strays with sweet amaze
Within the glades of glamour :
And hears around an elvish sound,
A merry midnight clamour :—

VI.

And now through all the glade 'tis mute,
And fear replaces wonder ;
His own feet make thro' fern and brake,
A sound more dread than thunder.

VII.

—Nine days are gone, nine days as one,
And Bracy hears the vesper bell ;
He prays he there might close his life,
So he find not his holy wife,
His sweet betrothéd Christabel.

VIII.

He kneels with calm wide-open'd eyes,
And sweet sleep takes him as he sighs :
He sleeps with fix'd wide-open'd eyes.

IX.

With fix'd uneasy gazing eyes ;
And Langdale towers before him rise ;
There on death-couch the Baron lies ;
And there the Lady Geraldine
Holds off her sire with spell and sign,
From the death-bed of Sir Leoline.

X.

Why dost thou start, Sir Leoline?
Thine own friend's hand is laid in thine;
The voice thou so long since would'st hear
Sounds in thine ear,
And whispers its forgiving love:
—In one forgiveness two forgiven,—
One that fled thence above,
And one assoil'd for heaven!

XI.

And is it truth or is it seeming?
He hears the midnight bell in dreaming;
He sees Lord Roland of Triermaine
Take Sir Leoline's hand again,
Nor heed the cry of Geraldine,
Nor by her sad unholy sign
And serpent-glance affrighted—
And lay his hand on the Baron's heart—
—Love united so to part,
Yet better so united—
He sees him sign the cross in dreaming;
Is it truth or is it dreaming?

XII.

And now beneath the old oak tree,
At midnight hour he seems to be:
Again he hears the midnight chiming:
Again he sees the green snake twining
Around the bird he loved so well,
Parentless in deep distress,
His sweet betrothéd Christabel!
And now he stoops the bird to take,
For none but for her own dear sake,
And the green snake lifts her head and flies—

XIII.

—Waking wide with blithe surprise,
And a glory round his eyes,
The midnight bell he heareth well,
And in his arm a maid he grasps,
And tremulous his arm she clasps:

And see her trembling eager eyes—
—But ere the gather'd dew-drops fell,
Love look'd forth without disguise,
For ever loosed from doubt and spell,
For ever his sweet Christabel!

XIV.

He kiss'd her on the gentle lips,
He kiss'd her on her forehead pale,
He clasp'd her nearer to his side,
'My flutter'd Dove—my rescued Bride'—
'Alas!' in perfect joy she sigh'd :—
With amorous echo low replied
The sweet soft-sighing nightingale.

XXIX.

COSPATRICK.

FROM THE MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

'Tis an old tale, and may be told once more :—
 —Cospatrick brings his Bride across the foam ;
 Fourscore tall ships bore Beauty from the bower,
 And fourscore ships in triumph bore to land :
 And twain and twain his kinsmen, blithe and bold,
 Marshall'd procession, lead her to the kirk :—
 —But she is sad, the Lady of the day :—
 —Why is she sad, the Lady of the day ?
 It is not for her saddle set awry,
 'Tis not the managed prancings of her steed :
 'I sorrow for my sorrowing mother's sake.
 Tell me, fair Page, that by my stirrup runs,
 And tell me true, the custom of the land.'
 'It is no custom,' the fair Page replies,
 'It is no message for a Lady's ear.
 For seven king's daughters, seven fair as thou,
 Cospatrick's wedded brides,—thy lord and mine—
 Each bridal after-morn went weeping home,
 Weeping, dishonour'd, bearing shameful wounds ;
 For they were frail, and thus he punish'd them.
 But any maid of maiden innocence,
 He bids unfearing to the bridal couch,
 Cospatrick's honour'd wife—thy lord and mine.'
 So they, till twain and twain the kirk was reach'd.
 But when reluctant even, orange-robed,
 Dyed her in grayness, and the bells were rung,
 And louder revel pledged Cospatrick's weal,
 Withdrawing thro' still chambers—as he came

The lady call'd her maiden to the bower,
And laid her there, and thro' the twilight fled.
And now the blithe Earl enter'd, and he saw
Long golden locks, but not the locks he loved;
And azure eyes, but not *that* azure: Then,
O then in full wrath from the couch he fled,
And wrathful thro' hush'd revellers in the hall,
And on his mother call'd:—'I of all men
Thro' Christian lands most wretched! once again
Now yet once more by woman's fraud beguiled!'
She bids her son among the revellers stay,
'For I will track the serpent to the lair,
For I will bring the tale should ne'er be brought'—
And she has steel'd her woman's heart to wrath,
And she has burst within the secret bower:
'I bare Cospatrick; I, a loyal wife:
But who art thou to bring dishonour thus
Within the precincts of a bridal bed?'
'O hear me, Mother, hear me on my knee:—
For we were seven sisters, fairer none,
Each still apart the fairest: youngest I:
And so it fell, one summer's afternoon,
When toil was over, and the lots were thrown
For who should walk the greenwood: and I knew—
—For aye my lot was hardest—ever cross'd—
Evil betides the youngest: so it fell:
For with the lot dishonour waited me
Within the greenwood, as I sought the rose,
The rose and wild thyme for my mother's bower:
—I pluck'd the rose, Mother, my rose was pluck'd:
For thro' the greenwood rode a gallant youth,
A gay gallant, and royal in his robes,
And eyes right royal: and he held me there,
Till even there: then from his breast he drew
A bracelet of bright beads, and placed on mine;
And bade me keep his bracelet and his ring,
And bade me keep a ringlet of his hair,
The tokens of true love against my need.'
O then Cospatrick's Mother smote her hands,
And took the tokens of true love, and ran,
And sought her son within the clamorous hall;
And cried, 'Where are the bracelet and the ring'
The tokens of true love I gave my child!'

But he was not within the clamorous hall,
Nor found within the bower: but where the ghosts
Of glimmering waves roll shrouded to the sands,
And cast themselves in suppliant faintness prone,
As maiden corpses when the wreck dissolves
And Death wafts Beauty shoreward:—but he heard:
—And as the blast that sends the surf ashore
E'en as it falls, veering in sudden flaw,
Catches the sinking crest, and whirls aloft:—
—So that remembrance borne upon her words
Smote silent sorrow, and his voice rose high:
'The maid that wears the bracelet and the ring,
I'd give my halls and towers to have her here,
My very life to call that beauty Bride.'
She threw her arms around her wondering child;
'O keep your halls and towers, my son, my son:
For she that wears the bracelet and the ring,
The tokens of true love, awaits thee *there*,
Herself more true: thy greenwood Bride: thine own'—
—Cospatrick clasp'd her neck, and wept aloud;
Wept in fulness of heart, and follow'd her.

XXX.

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN.

B A L L A D.

LORD GREGORY heard the raindrops plash,
 He heard the roof-tree groaning ;
 He heard the salt-sea billows crash :
 But he heard not his true love moaning.

'Open the Castle door' she cried,
 'To Lochroyan's shame and sorrow :
 To your own true love and the babe at her side,
 That should be born the morrow.'

'Oh hear ye not a maiden's sighs,
 And a babe's slow smother'd ailing?'—
 —But his mother laugh'd—' 'Tis the wind that cries
 Between the casements wailing.'

—The salt weeds heave 'neath the Castle rock,
 And the light on the ripples is leaping—
 Oh woe's the day—the wild waves play,
 But they stir not Lochroyan's sleeping.

And the salt weeds spread her oozy bed
 'Neath the long low breezes moaning :
 And they tangle o'er the bairn she bore
 All in her hour of groaning.

Lord Gregory gazed from the turret at morn,
 He kenn'd the billows' heaving :
 And is it his own true Maiden's form,
 Or is it love's deceiving ?

'Lochroyan—Lochroyan! 'tis I!' he cried;
'I see her bosom heaving:'
But when he press'd her wave-cold breast
He knew 'twas love's deceiving.

And his mother laugh'd the laugh of scorn,
Fair Annie's fingers grasping:—
And Lord Gregory kenn'd that his true love's hand
An infant's hand was clasping.

And he sigh'd out his life on the sighing air—
'She died as she lived in meekness—
But woe to the woman who would not spare
A woman's hour of weakness!'

XXXI.

REDBREAST'S DIRGE.

FROM 'THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.'

Rest, little ones, rest 'neath the leaves that we spread.
 So tender—so pure: are ye sleeping, or dead?
 Almost the thin leaves seem to stir in your breath,
 As tho' sleep had taken the likeness of death.

Rest, bright-hair'd one, rest 'neath the leaves that we
 spread.
 One little arm stretch'd 'neath thy Sister's fair head:
 One hand lock'd in hers, in assurance that she
 Is e'en in her death undivided from thee.

Rest, tender and fair, 'neath the leaves that we spread.
 Lie like a fresh snow-wreath that spring clouds have
 shed.
 Thy gentle limbs numb'd in the chill rustling air:
 Thy tender feet thorn-pierced, and blue-vein'd, and bare.

Rest, little ones, rest 'neath the leaves that we spread.
 Rest, lips press'd on lips: are ye sleeping, or dead?
 Ye smile, as in dreaming our dirge ye could hear:—
 Ye wept on your death-bed:—ye smile on your bier.

XXXII.

MARY AT LOCHLEVEN.

O'er the rippled Lochleven, each morning and even,
 Eastward and westward the glancing rays play;
 Oft 'twixt waking and dreaming I see the path gleaming
 Sunpaved in glory to guide me away.

Clear and free thro' the morning, in notes of gay scorning,
 High o'er my dungeon the lark trills her lay:
 Her downward way winging, the voice of her singing
 Wakes the lone silence with 'Hence and away.'

And, hark! shrill and taunting the trumpet-tones
 flaunting
 Swell from the shallop that sleeps on the bay;
 Love, Youth, and Pleasure there quaff their full measure,
 Then glide, soft embracing, at even away.

But I sit aweary and lonesome and dreary,
 Weary of sunlight and weary of day:
 Rise, Star of Even, o'er silver Lochleven;
 Bring back the thoughts of the years fled away.

Bring back the brightness, the freedom and lightness,
 Bring back my childhood so blithesome and gay:
 Fair France and her bowers, her spring-lavish'd flowers,
 The long trellis'd vines on the hills far away.

—Low night-winds breathing the smoke-curles are
wreathing

That 'neath my cage from the lowly roofs stray;
All things are creeping to silence and sleeping;
My soul is sleepless in wanderings away.

Ah! could I slumber no more to know cumber,
Sorrow and fear thro' the long weary day:
Know no awaking when red dawn is breaking,
But rest me in peace in the home far away.

XXXIII.

AMY ROBSART.

 AMY ROBSART AND EARL OF LEICESTER.

I.

'WHY hast brought me, love, in stranger lands from
 home so far to dwell:
 Far from the shelter'd cottage-eaves that cower within the
 dell;
 To beat imprison'd wings within a palace dungeon-hold;
 To sigh in cedar-rafter'd halls, amid the pomp of gold?

II.

'I gaze from out the lattice: 'tis on fields I ne'er have
 known:
 In vain I seek the garden-plot, in infancy mine own:
 The primrose-border'd walks I loved: the flowers that
 childhood knows;
 The sun-faced and the crimson-faced: the hearts-ease and
 the rose.

III.

'Where is the murmurous hive, my childhood's terror
 and delight:
 The nuts that hid them, green in green, and mock'd our
 aching sight?
 The pines that down the hill-side steep the garden to
 embrace:
 The bower where love threw off the veil, and face was
 known to face?'

IV.

—‘Ah little one—my little one—too humble for thy lot,
 Why wing the flight of vain desire to that deserted spot?
 No more the hearth-stone glows at eve: no more the
 brands are lit;
 Grass is waving round the hearth-stone: bats amid the
 rafters flit.

V.

‘I have brought thee where thy beauty should have fitting
 place to dwell:
 Beauty shrined in beauty: love in love’s own citadel.
 Say why then should terror pale the crimson flag of
 youth:
 Is there fear where Love is nestled: falsehood in the
 home of truth?’

VI.

‘If I sigh ’tis for the home, love, where heart is known to
 heart:
 Where common tasks the hands unite that in the world
 must part:
 Where feet still wing their evening path to their own
 native nest:
 Where toil leads down a well-worn day to a well-pur-
 chased rest.

VII.

‘Say that the home was homely: ’twas the home where I
 was nurst:
 Oh! whene’er my fancy turns there, tears from forth
 mine eyelids burst.
 Terrors haunt my sleeping hours my soul would fain
 disown:—
 Thou art by my side in sleeping: yet in dreams I weep
 alone.

VIII.

‘Though light to thee my fear may seem, bear with thy
 little one:
 We hold converse with thoughts in sleep, that, waking,
 most we shun:

Pale-eyed ghosts are hanging o'er us, breathing, breathing
 icy breath;
 Death is with us oft in sleeping: Sleep unbars to Brother
 Death.

IX.

'Last night an old remember'd face stood smiling by my
 bed:—
 They said that she was like me, ere she pass'd among the
 dead:—
 A friend with whom my childhood play'd: a sister-soul to
 mine:
 Cottage-born and nursed with me beneath the rose and
 eglantine.

X.

'What call'd her by my side?—she spoke—she sign'd to
 follow her:
 No answering breath my tongue could frame: my limbs
 refused to stir.
 In vain thy voice my faltering chid, and bade me gather
 strength;—
 My chamber door she oped, and fled along the gallery's
 length.

XI.

'The chequer'd lights through streaming glass fell o'er her
 as she trod:
 Adown a glade methought she slid: a grass-paved aisle of
 sod.
 What charm was on her? as through leaves the sun-
 beams fleck the lawn,
 In happy starts and bounds she play'd; a solitary Fawn.

XII.

'Thy voice I heard—for thou wert nigh—th' uncoupled
 greyhounds cheer:
 She fled through lengths of noonday shade, in recklessness
 of fear.

'Thou foolish one, why fear,' I cried; 'tis Leicester's voice; why fly?'—
 Nay but hear me, love—'twas but a dream—nay go not hence—'tis I.

XIII.

'Nay, tremble not—'twas but a dream—'twas I had cause for fright:
 Vision-bound and spectre-haunted in the spaces of the night.
 And was she not the maid I loved, though drest in dream-disguise?
 All quivering in her lithesome limbs—all suppliant in her eyes.

XIV.

'She near'd the ragged forest-edge: one bound—and she was free!
 She raised her, as the towering surge when winds are on the sea:—
 'Twas o'er—she 'scaped my straining eyes:—a shriek:—a stifled moan:—
 —I woke: the terror of the night in silence reign'd alone.

XV.

'Nay, mock me not; why hadst thou fled thine own affianced bride?
 In my fear I blindly sought thee: thou wert not at my side.
 What else let in the spectre-crowd of thoughts by death infected:
 Of dreams that cannot but forebode—though by the heart rejected?

XVI.

—'Nay, turn thine eyes upon me, love;—for am I not thine own?
 Happier far with thee to dwell, than that High One on her throne:—

Ah smile again: ah not in scorn of her, thy child—thy
wife:
Thou art all in all to her: the bliss, the breath, the heart
of life.

XVII.

‘Yes; though the gauzy veil of Spring may flush the
budding spray:
Though flowers their rainbow wreaths may twine to glad
the heart of May:
Though Autumn hang her golden spoils upon the bending
tree:—
Yet life were sere, and death were dear, if thou wert far
from me.’

XXXIV.

INTRODUCTION

TO FLETCHER'S 'FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS,' THE ORIGINAL
OF 'COMUS,' CONDEMNED ON ITS FIRST PERFORMANCE,
BUT REPRODUCED IN 1633, BY ORDER OF CHARLES I,
WITH A PROLOGUE BY SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT.

 CHARACTERS.

KING CHARLES I
QUEEN HENRIETTA

SIR THOMAS WENTWORTH
LAUD, Bishop of London

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT

King. DAVENANT, methinks the task I laid on thee
Was of the hardest. Ofttimes, as they say,
The skilful-handed jeweler of the South,
Genoa, or Venice, gives more precious hours—
More lamp-illumin'd nights of costly toil
To enchase and set the gem, than Nature spent
In her quick alchemy, the stone to frame
Which he so beautifies.

Davenant. My gracious lord,
If the king's words be lightning, should the hand
Be stunn'd, that executes them? Where the will
Is prompt, the act delays not.

King (to the Queen). Gentle fair,
'Tis for your sake, yours above all, my soul
Was set, that this fair masque, the brightest flower
Of our great Fletcher's sweetness—which, when first
It blossom'd forth, the rude misprizing age
Cast from them, lightly valued—should be play'd;
If it be so your pleasure.

Queen. Ah, my lord—
Pardonnez moi—je crains.

King. Nay, Henriette:—
 Nay, love:—I know thy woman's ear outruns
 Thy modest coy avowal: thou that lisp'st
 Soft English, and so lipping, giv'st the words
 A thousand times more than their native sweetness:—
 I know that 'twill delight thee:
 I read soft expectation in thine eye,
 Thy hand gives soft consent. Is all prepared?
Daven. The players, my lord, are ready: but we
 wait

Till Inigo and Vandyke—that mighty pair
 Join'd in high service, shall have set the scene
 In fit proportion garnish'd, framed, and blazon'd,
 Due to the gaze of England's Majesty.

King. Thrice gracious that fair sight, when sister
 Arts

Entwined and link'd in one high purpose stand,
 Upon their royal pedestal united!
 Hail, sister-Graces!—Painting, Song, and Thou
 Divinest Poesy—Were my will, good lords,
 The measure of my actions, I would win
 These goddesses to leave their sunny South,
 And plant a firm foot in my native realm,
 This sea-set jewel. By your aid, my friends,
 Wentworth and Laud—this island now hath rest:
 Another three years' calm—(such power hath God
 Lodged in his servant)—and the factious weeds
 Of fanatic rebellion, rooted up,
 Fair soil will leave, wherein to set the flowers
 Of meek-eyed Piety, with her gentle train
 Of hand-maid Arts attendant.

Laud. Be it so!
 The wishes of th' anointed King are laws,
 When Heaven smiles gracious.

Wentworth. Is't not strange, my lord,
 'Tis very strange, methinks, that there should live
 Those, in whom Nature contradicts herself.
 I know of some—my Lord of London knows—
 By the rank humours of th' infected age
 Blown up: in heart full Brownist, Puritan,
 Or by what titles faction gilds itself
 Self-christen'd:—men, to whose malignant heats
 This fair well-order'd polity of things,—

Religion, Law, subjected to the will
Of an anointed King—thence gathering strength
And higher beauty—children, round the throne
Of their loved Parent—seems a jangled tune,
A blot of all corruption :—yet whose souls
Are touch'd with high poetic exstasy,
To praise the things they love not.

King. I have heard so :
Yet scarce, e'en so, believe it. Are such gifts
Wasted on such ?

Went. Apollo, gracious Sire,
Claims them his vassals : bids them dance attendance :
Then, like another Orpheus, checks the strain,
And through their blood lets loose th' ungentle nature
Song-tranced one hour.

Daven. *There is a shepherd dwells
Down by the moor, whose life hath ever shown
More sullen discontent than Saturn's brow
When he sits frowning on the births of men :—*
—So sings our Fletcher. Late in Wales, my lords,
I lay at Ludlow Castle : there received
With courtesy and greeting.

Went. Aye 'tis so
Where Bridgewater commands.

Daven. His maiden daughter,
Lady Alice,—yet a child—of beauty framed
To tempt a poet's numbers—and o'ertask them,
With some impulsive girlish fancy seized,
Cried out, one eve, as in a bay'd recess,
O'erfretted with ribb'd sculpture-wreaths, she stood,
And flung her arms out as to guard the spot—
—While all her kindred smiled to see her, set
Like some fair picture in its golden frame—
'O would some bard were here, at whose command
I might enact a Faithful Shepherdess !'
—With that a youth, whose voice that evening tried
Had charm'd the listening audience : a bright youth
*His hair more beauteous than those hanging locks
Of young Apollo*—spake : 'And be it so,
Fair lady :—by your leave, due time allow'd,
Myself will deck the scene, and frame a song
For maiden virtue fit, wherein thy voice
May chaunt the praise of spotless chastity,

And draw applause from listening Jove himself,
And that immortal court.'

The noble lord,
Her father, smiled assent; then turning, said:
'Davenant, methinks, if an old man may speak
A few faint words of social prophecy,
In that bright youth—young Milton—note him well—
A budding greatness lies, that shall enrich
E'en this great realm of England's poesy.'
—And, sooth, my lords, such modest-seeming worth,
With graceful self-reliance not ungifted,
Hath rarely pass'd before me. Yet, I fear,
You'd hold the rose was canker'd in the bud.

King. What says our honour'd Prelate?

Laud.

Gracious King,

I know this youth for one, whose factious lips
Cried, 'Liberty!' ere yet his beard was ripe:
Against his order'd lords and governors
Rebellious. And it grieves me, when I see
Fair studious learning, which above his years
He woos assiduous, as report assures,
To froward ends enslaved.

King.

I marvel most
(For studious youth, though rash, to wiser counsel
Oft lends attentive ear) that when the light,—
The second light of this our English stage—
Has given this fair creation to the day,
This Faithful Shepherdess—another's feet
Within his hallow'd ground should dare to tread.

Daven. Love guides, and we tread safely.—This
same youth,

A faithful shepherd on Parnassus' hill,
Your royal leave obtain'd, will stand this night
A happy auditor of Fletcher's story.

King. The wish is granted, Davenant.—We stand
ready. [*Exeunt.*]

King (alone). All things are set and order'd. Oh!
that all

In this my realm, were set and order'd so,
In fair proportion and due comeliness!—
—Ruler of Rulers! O that to Thy will
Submissive, I, Thy servant, on the stage

Of this Thy kingdom, might enact my part
 A faithful shepherd to th' entrusted flock!
 That Faith and Love might lead obedience up,
 And teeming Plenty, following on her steps,
 Renew th' obscuréd smiles of once-bright England!
 —That Thou wouldst flash th' effulgence of Thy beams,
 T' uncloud the veiled face of radiant Truth:
 That what I am, my flock might recognise:
 And I might know, what before Thee, I am.

(Music within.)

Even is here—soft, silver, happy Even;
 Darkness is falling.
 Gentle dews raining from propitious heaven:
 Sleep soul-enthraling.
 But in the golden halls
 Lamps gleam from tapestry'd walls,
 Daytide recalling.
 Royal Light of England's glory
 Enter and hear us:
 List to our story.
 Lo! where the Shepherdess
 Sits in her wailing, moans in her sharp distress:
 Hung with a coronal,
 Pensive, funereal:—
 —Enter, and hear us.

(Curtain rises.)

xxxv.

M I L T O N.

1660.

'WHAT matters it, though in the city around
 This quiet dwelling, tumult, and the din
 Of popular applause, should welcome back
 The godless ruler, late o'er the face of earth
 By God's plain finger driven forth hence to wander?
 Within this house, as in the farthest shrine,
 Holy of Holies, peace and passionless calm,
 The common-weal of the untyrannized soul
 Reign constant, and the service of God proceeds
 From that pure Temple which He most desires.
 So will I rest me here and die in freedom.
 —Light of mine eyes! I would not win thee back
 To see the shame of England; soon repentant
 Of that short breathing-time of holiness,
 Rule of the Saints, soon ended, when the One
 Chosen of God to save his flock cast down,
 The Thunderer, first of men, pass'd hence away
 In that foreboding tempest, omen sure
 Darkening th' horizon of the coming years.
 Where is that iron will inflexible,
 That stern simplicity of th' heroic soul,
 High justice, that the shows and forms despising
 By which the right is hamper'd, clear'd the way
 Straight-hewn and level'd before the royal mind
 Advancing in her glory? Where the lips
 That hurled foul scorn at Italy and Spain,
 And set the Banner of Salvation up

On that high hill of England's majesty?
—And is it thus that God afflicts His servants,
E'en in their graves unresting, whence the touch
Of harpy-slaves, foul minions, priests of Hell,
Tears their remains, dishonour'd, scorn'd and jeer'd at
By ribaldry of th' ingrateful multitude?
My heart forebodes me that I ne'er shall toil
For that good cause again, or hear them blow
The trumpet of God to battle: but encompass'd
With mine own thoughts, unwearied company,
Turn inwards: from the sight of glory defaced,
The Shield of England's Commonwealth obscured,
Broken and tarnish'd.—But the great Deliverer
Will yet appoint His time, and come in glory.—
Come then, great long-expected day: send up
The first forerunning shafts of dewy light
Over th' horizon: let the morning gales
Breathe o'er the wearied heart, that would ascend
Far o'er Earth's round in purer air to rest:—
Expectant till Heaven's gate shall ope, and pour
The full irradiant flood, that scarce restrain'd
Streams o'er the galaxy, when the Moon hangs low
Seen nightly glowing. But the light of stars,
This white and palpitating maze of brightness,
And that great orb that darts the central fire,
Central, or circumambient: as a lamp
Before his full-faced blaze hung up in view,
Within th' o'erflooding glow of Heaven reveal'd
Shall sink and pale: till all this frame of things,
Th' abysses of aethereal space, the worlds,
Th' illimitable breathing universe,
By God's immediate presence interfused
Shall glow one white, entire, and perfect crystal:
Clear ringing with the songs of cherubim
And harping angel-choirs: God, All in All,
Eternity's irrevoluble circle,
Fulfil'd in overmeasure of dateless Love.'

XXXVI.

SONG OF GOETHE.

AN DIE ENTFERNTE.

I.

LOVE, my Love, where dost thou hide thee?
 Whither art fled from me?
 The wind I ask'd, if he had spied thee,
 Roving o'er earth and sea:
 But the wind sigh'd, for earth is wide:
 He had not breathed on thee.

II.

I ask'd the cloud-rack, floating ever
 O'er ocean, hill, and plain:
 I ask'd the Spirit of the River,
 Casting his lucent chain
 Round wood and lea, round province and city:
 But ah! the search was vain.

III.

I ask'd the summits of the mountains,
 Scanning broad earth below:
 The murmurous, stealthy-pacing fountains,
 Winding in silver flow
 'Neath the feet of men through cavern and den:
 They mock'd the words of woe.

IV.

I ask'd the blue skies, smiling brightly :
I ask'd the sweet spring rain,
The gauzy shower, that, floating lightly,
Falls, dries, and falls again :
The stars I ask'd, the circling sun I ask'd :
But ah ! the search was vain.

V.

Love, my Love, I sat me sighing,
Seeking in vain for thee :
From the breeze I heard thy voice replying :
' Ask not in Earth or Sea :
Ask not beneath, above : ask but of answering Love :
He will guide thee to me.'

XXXVII.

TO LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

10TH DECEMBER, 1848.

' Solus omnium ante se Principum in melius mutatus.'

I.

INHERITOR of more than kings can grant,
 Or full-voiced senates on the brave bestow ;
 —That loftiest proudest Name this earth can vaunt,
 Since he, the Crescent Foe,

II.

Th' Arabian Slave, within Medina waned,
 —High is the task and matchless the reward
 Awaiting, if thy sway win back, unstain'd,
 All that the fiery sword,

III.

Th' unbending adamantine force of will,
 And th' eagle glance of the prophetic eye
 Gain'd for his France of true relief from ill ;
 The fix'd security

IV.

Pillar'd on law and trust of man in man,
 The reasonable freedom of the race ;
 Fresh golden marts for commerce, the firm plan
 Of rule, that knew no place

V.

No height, that men of strength in heart or mind,
 Noblesse of Nature, might not seek and gain :—
 —If such thy works, the blessings of thy kind
 Well-won, thou wilt attain.

VI.

No crown For citizens saved e'er shone more bright
 Than that great title France prepares for thee,
 When thou hast built her firm on Peace and Right ;
 —The First among the Free.

XXXVIII.

ON THE DEATH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL.

' Strange that on the bloodless field of Statesmanship death should
come with the suddenness, the violence, and the anguish of War !'

TIMES, July 8, 1850.

I.

WAR spares her favourite children. Heroes greet
The gentler day of bloodless victories :
The hundred fights are won, the warrior feet
Tread in the laurell'd paths of golden ease.

II.

But fate had stored a lightning stroke for thee,
The dark and violent death that waits on strife ;
E'en when thou seem'dst from touch of harm most free,
Set in the calm maturity of life.

III.

We cannot all repress the heart's lament :
We need the guiding accents of the sage :
Too soon he purchased his enfranchisement :
He should have gone down to the grave in age.

IV.

We weep the blow that brought him that release :
Want's long enduring cry his aidance claims :
He should have gone down to the grave in peace :
So had his end been equall'd with his aims.

V.

Alas ! for high anticipated deeds :
High present glories : recollections high :
For censure, that misunderstanding breeds :
For plans, that fail'd of full maturity !

VI.

Alas ! for death that came with pain, with haste,
Shorn of the pomp and circumstance of strife !
—Yet glory round the dying Great is cast :
Their sunset, takes a lustre from their life.

VII.

Not all that clad the Brave and Wise in glory
Is hid within the darkness where they lie.
—Thou art incorporate with England's story,
Entreasured in a nation's memory.

XXXIX.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE.

 SONNET TO SIR J. REYNOLDS.

REYNOLDS, thou art alive in children yet—

Where'er their smiles are gay, their tresses bright,

Where'er the young eyes glance, the feet trip light,
Thine all-presaging skill its stamp hath set.

On little Alice late one morn I gazed,

Darling of many hearts, half risen from sleep :

The long loose locks, the moist full eyes set deep

In chisell'd shade : translucent hands upraised

From sleep-flush'd cheeks the wavy stream to part :

Coralline lips, and curved in wakening glee :—

I sigh'd to think thou wert not there to see

The gracious incarnation of thine art :—

—So this faint sketch upon thy shrine I place,

Pleased thy suggestion with thy name to grace.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE.

 BLUETTE.

COUCH'D on flowers in greenwood wild
 Here I watch my favourite Child :
 Playmate meet for kindred flowers :
 Nursling of the bounteous hours.
 Lily-robed in vesture white,
 Save where silken ribbon blue
 Spans the tender waist, while thro'
 Softly traced in wavering light
 Her sweet limbs' faint outline gleams,
 And the white frock whiter seems.
 I can watch her, crouching still :
 I can watch her at my will :
 Head aside in steady gazing,
 Eyes their earnest lids upraising :
 Sunny locks, that o'er the forehead
 O'er the fair soft-rounded cheek
 Trace the tender cloud of shadow,
 Playful curve, and pearly streak :
 Parted lips, and even breathing—
 Sweet, as mists at morn upwreathing.
 In Anthemöé's valleys, where
 'Neath the ash Iánthé fair
 Softly smooths her odorous hair ;
 While her azure eyes are bent
 On their native firmament.—
 —But O fairer flower mine,
 Why thy little hands entwine
 Thus 'gainst thy sweet bosom prest ?
 Why this long, unwonted rest ?

Why these mute inquiring gazes ?
What fancy lodges in thy breast ?
What is't my little one amazes ?
My favourite child ?

'Twas nought, she cried, 'twas nought, and smiled,
Then lightly sprang beneath the tree,
And smooth'd her hair, and clasp'd my knee,
And pray'd I would a tale unfold her :
Some fairy tale, I ne'er had told her :
Some fairy tale, the hours beguiling :
And smiled till I gave back her smiling :
And smiled again, in pride to see
The smile that spoke her victory !
—A happy cry !—a shout of pleasure !
—'A book—a book—what's this'—
And I gave utterance to my thought :
'There's nothing gain'd on earth for nought :
For thee the fairy tales I brought—
For thee the book, my little one—
And then for me, the kiss.'
—I gazed on her : I spoke : she heard :
But yet nor look'd, nor spoke, nor stirr'd,
For all her downcast eyes were bent
On that book's gay emblazonment :
The silk-wove azure that encased it :
The golden fret-work that enchased it :—
And then on mine the baby maid
Her wishful fingers gently laid,
And raised her eyes in soft request—
Yet firm I grasp'd it in my hand :
I would or could not understand,
Such wandering thoughts my brain possess'd.
—For I in vain that morn had sought
To reperuse the book I brought :
I could not re-awake the spell,
The young enchantment loved so well :—
And now 'Tis so—'tis so—I said—
'The fresh delight of youth is fled !
Else why this day that vain endeavour
To conjure back the lost for ever—
Once more a child to ride right on
Thro' Fairyland and Avalon—

Enmail'd in gold 'mong Arthur's knights,
 Or nursed 'mid genii and 'mid sprites?
 It is indeed a vain endeavour
 To conjure back the lost for ever—
 To those alone the tales are dear
 Who are themselves the things they hear :
 Who claim with sprite and angel kin,
 As fair without—as pure within :
 And prove descent of fairy race
 By sweet capriciousness of grace.—
 —Look, darling, look!—I spoke : she heard :
 And yet nor look'd, nor spoke, nor stirr'd :—
 As violet cups by dew-drops bent,
 Her head was o'er the treasure leant :
 Her bright young head lay pillow'd there,
 Her warm tears on my hand,
 And all abandon'd to despair
 In thousand waves entangled were
 The sunny mazes of her hair.

—O sweet Childhood!—all forgiving!—
 'What ails her then, my child,' I said :—
 O quick she raised the downcast head,
 And quick her earnest eyes upraised
 Half way set 'twixt smile and tear—
 And on my eyes once more she gazed,
 And half put off her fear :—
 —Yet again, as tho' afraid,
 On my hand her hands she laid,
 And spread the timid palms above :—
 And in my hand her hands she laid,
 And look'd a wishful look, and said
 Some gentle words, some lispéd love,
 And was re-comforted.

O sweet Childhood!—all forgiving!
 All thy sweetness freely giving—
 Trustful words and loving smiles—
 Natural tears and artless wiles—
 Weakness—sorrow—joy—caress—
 Lavish'd in the large excess
 Of thine all-confidingness!

—I touch'd the glowing cheek,—and then
 Sunny smiles broke forth again :

I laid the treasure in her grasp ;
 And while her hands the leaves unclasp,
 My heart gave back her happy smiling,
 With thoughts of her my thoughts beguiling—
 Till sweet sleep took me by the hand
 And led me back to Fairyland :—
 I knew the flowers : I knew the meads :
 —I knew that jocund throng :
 I drank the large purpureal air :
 The golden harps twang'd shrill and sweet :
 But yet a chain was on my feet,
 Spell-bound and rooted there.
 When gliding from the jocund throng
 An angel child was at my side—
 A Fairy Fair—a gracious sight—
 And smiled a smile of rosy light,—
 And trill'd the burden of the song,
 The festive chorus echoing wide—
 And took my hand, and led me in
 Within the fairy ring :—
 And bade the harps renew their strain,
 And bade me hold me by her side,
 And be a child again.—

Round my sleep-entrancèd head
 Gushing notes of mirth are breaking :—
 Fled the dream—the vision fled—
 Happy dream—but happier waking !—
 O sight of joy assured—I see
 The little wonderer at my knee—
 —Is she the Vision robed in light—
 The Fairy Fair—the gracious sight :
 The angel child, that loosed the chain,
 And bade me be a child again ?—
 —Look up ! look up ! those smiles I know :
 Those earnest eyes—'tis so ! 'tis so !—
 Thy hands the pictured leaves turn o'er :
 The fairy tale delights once more—
 That wonder-land once more I see—
 Once more am I a child in Thee.
 —Thy smiles o'erprice the gift I gave thee,—
 Yet still one last reward I crave thee.
 —Come ! hands in hands !—'tis done with ease,—
 One buoyant spring from bended knees—

One trustful leap:—my arms surround thee—
A second sash to fold around thee :—
Thy broken words thy thanks express :
Thy reverential tenderness :
Thy young heart guileless of pretence,
The love-for-love of Innocence !
Thy flutter'd breath thy joy confesses—
Repay me with thy pure caresses :
Around my neck one little arm—
The fond young lips prest close and warm :—
—My darling heart to heart I fold,
—My happier Vision I behold :—
The white soft frock—the sash of blue—
The edging lace—the tiny shoe ;
The sock turn'd down—the ancle fine—
The wavy folds—the bosom line :
The grass-stain'd impress of thy knee—
The flounce torn out in greenwood glee :—
Each accident of childly dress
Partaking thy sweet sacredness :—
Ah far past Fairy counterfeiture
This very child—this gracious Creature ;—
The quick warm breath : the heaving breast :
The tender weight against me prest :
The fair fine limbs—the soft—the pure—
All maidenhood in miniature :
The soul incorporate in the frame :
As fair, as bright, as pure from shame :
The sweet frail thing that wept and smiled—
The more than Angel in the Child.

XL.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

'Twas the fairest day of departing June,
 That gave birth to this slumberous afternoon :
 The sun has fallen behind the trees :
 But he may not awaken his evening breeze,
 Till the underwood flames in his glory.

'Dear child, put your flower within your book :
 Turn it down in the shady window-nook :
 There is something heavy upon my heart :
 Come, sing me the sweetest of sweet Mozart ;
Deh vieni in tune with thy story.'

'Then take the book, and read on for me :
 O ! take the book ; if your eyes I see
 So fixed on mine, can I sing and play ?
 O, take your eyes, mother, dear, away !
 O what have I done that should pain them ?'

—'As her summers pass my love will be taught
 That the sweetest day brings the saddest thought :
 —Little I reck'd as the years went by
 That those I loved as the flowers must die,
 Or what I would give to regain them.

'Tis the self-same day, could the days return,
 And I was seeking the seeded fern
 That veils us, they say, from mortal sight,
 When from the window, with fond delight,
 The voice of my mother recall'd me.

'I would not grant her her slight request,
To sing her the song that she loved best :
She wept : but not as now I weep :—
But oft that voice 'mid unquiet sleep
And the long weary day-time has call'd me.

'What is Death, that he should bid us part ?
Her heart is beating within my heart :
She calls my darling the song to raise,
The song that she loved in the summer-days,
Ere her summer flowers were blighted.

'I have wept when I saw thee sit and sing
In the grass 'neath which she is slumbering :—
Come ! Child : for thy voice may reach her rest :
We will sing her the song that she loved best,
Till our spirits with hers are united.'

L A M E N T.

—ἰοστεφάνου στόματος γλυκεῖαν ἰδάκρυσαν
 ψυχάν ἀποπνέοντα γαλαθηνόν τέκος.—

FOND heart, well may'st thou loathe the day,
 The hour that saw thy birth :
 For know, for know thy little one
 Is now dissolving earth.

The form, thine eyes' fond dwelling-place,
 Is better now unseen :
 The soul that smiled and lisp'd to thee,
 Is as it ne'er had been.

Lay by the hope, fond heart, the hope,
 In some far land to greet
 The beckoning of her infant hands,
 The twinkling of her feet :

The parted gold of sunny locks :
 The heaving of the breast :
 The gleam of half-awaken'd eyes ;
 The diamond dew of rest :

The smile that play'd o'er depths of sleep,
 All touch of fear beguiling
 That thou shouldst wake, while she should sleep
 The sleep that knows no smiling.

If individual life survives
 That last faint parting moan,
 Amidst so many thousand dead,
 Say, could'st thou know thine own ?—

—Lay by the hope, fond heart, and weep
 The hour that saw her birth ;
 For know, for know thy little one
 Is now dissolving earth.

ANSWER.

THEY bid me lay the hope aside :
 They bid me sit and weep :
 But how can I the thought deny
 That waking follows sleep ?

I sleep—and yet the soul awakes :
 I sleep : sleep ends in waking :
 Thy words weigh down the broken heart
 To depths of endless breaking.

I know that at my voice no more
 The little footsteps stir :
 I know she ne'er returns to me :
 But I shall go to her.

A few short years—ah ! long though short—
 Mine own from me may sever :
 One hour, one hour will bid us rise,
 And leave her mine for ever.

—Then why forbid the tearful hope,
 Why bid me sit and weep ?
 For how can I the thought deny
 That waking follows sleep ?

XLII.

TO AGNES GRACE.

I.

O FAIR the blossom on the bough
 That falls when Eve is falling :
 And fair the golden Autumn fruit
 The flowers of Spring recalling !

II.

And come, fair Child, and smile on me
 With full set eyes and willing ;
 The promise of thy nursery song
 From rosy lips fulfilling.

III.

No prize-crown'd hour of Greece was e'er
 To youthful victor dearer,
 Than when the Child first feels her words
 Gain a delighted hearer.

IV.

My answering smiles confess thy power :
 Thy power first felt delights thee :
 To prove that with the elder world
 Some sympathy unites thee.

V.

—I smile for what she blindly knows ;
 For what she knows not sighing :
 —For Time's tyrannic march, the Child
 From Childhood disallying.

VI.

O stern irrevoluble march!
O Sarsar wind pervading!
The gracious flowers before thee fade,
Unconscious of their fading!

VII.

—O fair the blossom on the bough
With twilight Childhood falling:—
And fair the golden Autumn fruit
The bloom of youth recalling!

VIII.

Between our childhood and our age
The heats of summer tremble:
Defeated Love and Hopes unheard
Upon the waste assemble.

IX.

And thoughts of earlier promise flown
Or still delaying sadden:—
O long the flower must fade, before
The fruit our eyes may gladden.

X.

Yet, dear one, in thy smiles we see
The strength that will sustain thee,
Till Childhood's happy peace once more
And blithesomeness regain thee.

XI.

—We promise kisses, soon repaid,
Within our arms to win thee:
We gaze on azure eyes, that tell
The depths of Heaven within thee.

XII.

We bless thee, darling, as thou art,
Our foolish fancy stilling :—
The loving promise of thy youth
We trust to Love's fulfilling.

XIII.

We bless the smiles of rising day
That shame our blind regretting :
We know each grace that gilds the dawn
Will glorify the setting.

XLIII.

DEDICATION

TO A VOLUME OF TALES FOR CHILDREN.

 TO MARGARET —

I.

To gild again the golden hours of leisure
 What little voice has ask'd me for a tale?
 What eyes, bright beaming in the hope of pleasure,
 The wishful secret of the heart unveil?
 What eager hands unclasp the proffer'd treasure?
 What all-rewarding smiles my labour hail?
 —Your smiles, dear child, untask the months' employ-
 ment,
 And from your joy I take my own enjoyment.

II.

'Tis well, I said, when thus you first besought me—
 The angel visions of my youth are o'er:—
 How should I sing, except some fairy taught me
 A sweet Midsummer's Tale, unsung before?
 Her slumberous draught unless Titania brought me,
 How should I dream, and be a child once more?—
 —You smiled:—that night Titania hover'd o'er me,
 And touch'd my eyes, and spread her realms before me.

III.

Tall cypress spires thro' flaky cedars rising ;
Crystalline streams and azure-trembling sky ;
Broad emerald lawns, where, trick'd in gay disguising,
Puck led the dance of elvish revelry ;
And, cloud-inborne amid their court's uprising,
Titania with Alraschid throned on high :—
—When, lo! thick gathering wings the blue o'erahaded:
I woke: the vision fled: the glory faded.

IV.

But now once more, in happy hesitation,
My waken'd eyes their angel vision see :
My own Titania quits her fairy station,
And smiles her eager rapture at my knee :—
—In those dear eyes I read my inspiration :
Fain would I consecrate thine own to thee :—
—Thy kisses seal the licence as I crave it,
And I inscribe the gift to her that gave it.

XLIV.

THE DREAM-CHILD.

'She stood before me like a thought ;
A dream remember'd in a dream.'

O SAD sweet Power, that in this waking dream
Which men call Life, stores up, and sets the Past
By Time's effacement weaken'd, not destroy'd,
Before the Present : thought to thought recurring :
All action moulded then to thought : all words,
All purposes !

We call'd not, but the ghosts
Are trooping round us : shadows, yet too true :
Unheedful, unremoving : real all
E'en in their unreality : unchanged
Where all else seems so changeful.

Yet thy sway
Is not all-powerful, Memory : there are realms
Where thine is but divided empery,
Where Reason yields to Slumber : snaps the thread :
No more links thought to thought : but lets them drop
Like pearls dischain'd, upon the dreaming mind,
That catches each impression as it falls
Impuissant to combine them. Dreams arise
And fade at light, nor interchange with dreams :
Vision of former vision ignorant
And sleep unconscious of the gifts that sleep
In other hours had brought us. Nor, they say,
Is there aught else so potent betwixt dream
And waking to distinguish : 'tis the mark,
This disconnexion, that parts off the true
From the unsubstantial.

And yet here Remembrance,
 At her own time, puts forth a sudden sway,
 And gives a seeming reason to th' unreal :
 With fancied act inlacing fancied act,
 Vision to vision calling—till in dreams
 Thought dwells on former dreams, and knows them such,
 Holding the Present real.

There was one
 Our inmate late, and joyous playfellow :
 A Child, whose own o'erflowing happiness
 Made all around her sharers : strong to chase
 The thoughtfulness of grief, with careless glee
 And loving mirth : her image on our minds
 Indelibly stamping.

—Ah, now thou art gone,
 Now thou art gone, the visions of the night
 Have oft recall'd thee to desiring eyes,
 Desiring eyes and arms : and bid me think
 That thou wert yet among us, till I waked,
 And knew the sad deceit, that Fancy wrought
 In that false restoration.

Once again
 I dreamt that she was with me. 'Twas a hall
 Throng'd with grave heads, and serious presences
 Of aged study. Long the conclave sat,
 Holding deep council—yet in vain—so seem'd it—
 On what the State might purpose to effect
 Of imminent change in Academic halls.
 And I was there, unsummon'd : for I saw
 My little fair one, anxious and alone :
 One Child among deliberating chiefs,
 One rose among the thistles.

In I rush'd
 And drew her forth, 'mid startled looks, and words
 Where scorn with wonder mingled.

But alone
 With little Margaret, I clasp'd her fast,
 And said 'The day was fix'd : the hour has come,
 Dearest, that thou once more shouldst be with us :
 'Tis strange, but late I thought so : 'twas a dream :
 'Twas but a dream : no more : I know it such :
 But we are waking now : the hour has come :
 Come thou too, dearest.'

—And around my neck
Her little arms she flung : then on my lips
Press'd treasured soft caresses : more than oft
Regardless Childhood lavishes : sure proof,
Sweet, undesign'd, of love that knew no stint,
No looking back, or forward : the pure love
Of self-unconscious confidence.—

—Ah, dear one,
Why should I wake, and know it but a dream,
A dream that dream'd of dreams :—and find thee not,
Save in the haunts of daylight recollection,
Mine own—and not mine own ?

XLV.

TO FLORENCE.

LOWESTOFT: 16 AUG. 1847.

LITTLE wild one, whither art thou roaming?
Little wild one, the wave is round thee foaming:
Round thy feet the mazy waters eddying:
Wait their smooth reflux, thy footsteps steadying.

Mary, come, watch here your sister playing;
Over the level sands untired straying:
Over the sands, where like a lapwing chasing
Waywardly she her fancy's path is tracing.

Gleaming sea-gems unveil themselves around her:
Moist agates and carnelian-flames surround her:
Happy child, for whom the sands have treasures:
Barren sands for her have countless pleasures.

Smilingly o'er the sea the sun is glancing:
Smile for smile thou giv'st his waves advancing:
So may joy attend thy years' increasing:
Happy peace, all joy, with smiles unceasing.

XLVI.

TO —

—

FAIR Child, thou can'st not know why thus entranced
 I gaze upon thine earnest eager eyes :
 Envyng their unabash'd confiding glance,
 Th' ingenuous countenance,
 And God's great gift of Love without disguise.

Thou can'st not tell why with admiring eyes
 I watch thy motions of unconscious grace :
 All freedom, circumscribed by inborn laws :
 Self-rein'd with happy pause,
 When joy spurs childhood on in reckless race.

O youthful heiress of life's lavish grace—
 Noble in Nature's own nobility—
 Dear for thine unforesightful fearlessness,
 Thine anxious tenderness—
 'Tis not alone these gifts I prize in thee :—

But that this stamp of high nobility,
 The fearless heart, the tender, and the true,
 Are yet another's charms :—not thine alone :—
 From all save Memory flown :
 Dearer, when lost : more prized, when torn from view.

XLVII.

FIORETTA.

VIOLET are my darling's eyes :
Rosy red her fingers :
Violet shadows round her cheek,
Where the red rose lingers.

Lily fair my darling's brow :
Primrose gold her tresses :
Lily sweet the baby breath :
Sweeter the caresses.

Happy sunlight where she sits
Pearly pure reposes :
Happy laughter lights her eyes,
Singing to the roses.

O'er her daisy-circled brow
Dewy diamonds shower :
Tears of flowers are all her tears,
And herself a Flower.

XLVIII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

I.

I LOVE the gracious littleness
 Of Childhood's fancied reign :
 The narrow chambers and the nooks
 That could a world contain :
 The fairy landscapes on the walls
 And half-imagined faces :
 The stairs that led to wider realms,
 The passage-scene of races.
 —By stranger feet the home is trod,
 Yet still the rooms I see :
 But the blithesome days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me.

II.

I love the little room where first
 On infant reason broke
 The knowledge we had seen before
 The place in which we woke :
 Where first we link'd a happy eve
 To an all-sunny morning :
 Nor in that rigid chain of time
 Read any note of warning.
 Why are the years together forged
 And bound by Fate's decree,
 If the blithesome days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me ?

III.

I love the broken plaything ghosts
 That once were living joys:
 Th' extemporised delight we snatch'd
 From toys that were not toys.
 The hands that tended infant limbs,
 The feet that rock'd our sleeping:
 The lips that told the wholesome lies
 That stay'd our idle weeping.
 These echoes from the past I prize,
 Though faint and rare they be:
 For ah! the days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me.

IV.

I love the swing that shook between
 The jaw-bones of the whale:
 The vessel-seeming garden-boat
 The scene of feast and tale:
 The mat-roof'd cabin where we crouch'd
 And scorn'd the storm together:
 Th' initials flourish'd on the beech
 To tell our loves for ever:
 That half we wish'd and half we fear'd
 Another's eyes might see:—
 —Ah, that the days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me!

V.

I love the lawn—the scene of high
 Hellenic bulrush fights:
 Where Homer's heroes, snatch'd from Pope,
 Gave names to childly knights:
 Where after life was shadow'd out
 In feats of happy daring,
 Till each went off the field with joy
 The victor-trophies sharing:
 To count the shatter'd darts that lay,
 The dints that scarr'd the tree—
 Ah, that the days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me!

VI.

I love the palaces we built,
 The fancied brick or stone :
 The forts for happy bloodless siege,
 And conquest gaily won :—
 The mimic puppet-shows we framed
 To act some Shakspeare story ;
 Where Rome and Forres rose once more,
 And Caesar fell in glory :
 Where all was false and all was true
 The moment might decree.—
 —Ah that the days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me !

VII.

I love the foolish words—that love
 Recorded as they fell :
 The very faults that then we wept,
 The follies prized too well :—
 Alas for loss that Time has wrought :
 For joys, of grief that borrow :
 For sorrows that we cannot weep,
 And sins that bring no sorrow !
 Where is that unremorseful grief,
 That unreflecting glee ?—
 Alas ! the days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me.

VIII.

I love the timid soul, that blush'd
 Before an elder's look :
 Yet from its equals in the game
 No tyranny could brook :—
 That spoke undaunted truth, no veils
 Of custom interposing :
 Nor fear'd its weakness and its strength
 To open hearts disclosing.
 I love the very strife that left
 Our souls for love more free :
 For the truthful days of childhood
 May ne'er return to me.

IX.

—Alas for hands that then we clasp'd :
For merry tripping feet :
For daily thoughtless welcomings,
And partings but to meet !
The shout, the song, the leap, the race :
The light of happy faces :
The ready aid : the love—alas—
And childly fond embraces.
—I hoard the thought of things that were,
And ne'er again shall be :
For the loving days of childhood
May ne'er return to me.

X.

—But O blithe little ones—that dance,
And bid me join your play :
How can I share your blessedness ?
How can I turn away ?—
—I catch the gleam of sunny locks :
The light of happy faces :—
The hurried breath of quick delight :
The proffer'd pure embraces :—
—I cannot aught but take the gift,
The love you lavish free :—
In you the days of childhood
May yet return to me.

XLIX.

TO THE LADY-AUTHOR OF THE 'CHILD'S
SUMMER.'

BECAUSE thou hast the gifts of God's own child—
 The keen observance of revering love :
 The microscopic glance of eyes that rove
 Close down amongst entangling weeds thick piled :—
 Because thy brows are with the promise sign'd
 Of more complete perfection than the skill
 Of pliant hands yet masters to thy will ;
 The presage of the forward-glancing mind—
 Because thou know'st the limits of thy strength
 And art well-pleased awhile a child to be,—
 Childhood's Interpreter,—we honour Thee :
 Secure, when Time fulfilment brings at length,
 With joy to track thine upward climbing way,
 And own the Dawn less glorious than the Day.

L.

TO W. W.

THY smile's full sweetness, and thy music voice :
 The ever-ready treasures of thy mind :
 The wit that bade its very aim rejoice :
 All tenderness with manliness combined :
 The soft delight in childhood : courage high :
 The gallant impulse of a generous race :
 The diffident kindling of a modest eye :
 Success, that took a seeming ease from grace :—
 —All these, as summer woos each several rose
 To blush its beauty on the curious air,
 I mark'd the sunshine of thy years disclose,
 While each new fairness seem'd in turn more fair :
 —All these—— : and yet but half thy worth I knew :
 For Time proves thy love as thy graces true.

II.

TO M— M—.

 OXFORD: DEC. 1851.

AN English welcome to an English shore,
 Such as we could, some four years since we gave thee :
 Not knowing what the days reserved in store,
 Or that our land among her sons would have thee.
 But now thou art endenizen'd awhile
 Almost we fear our greeting to renew,
 Lest that we seem'd to promise should beguile
 When all we are is open to thy view.
 And yet if aught of what we fondly boast,
 True-hearted warmth of friendship, frank and free,
 Survive within this ocean-circled coast,
 We need not fear again to welcome thee :—
 —So may we, blessing thee, ourselves be blest,
 And prove not all unworthy of our Guest.

LII.

TO G. C. A.

SINCE thou and I first one another knew
So many years, dear Friend, have whirl'd them by,
That casual talk or jest may lord it thro'
Our hours of meeting when the crowd is nigh.
On that familiar scene, each other's mind,
There is no need for deep enquiring gaze:
No fear the trifles non-acceptance find
That confidence to confidence displays.
But when, more happy-grave, on serious things
Thy balanced judgment and quick insight turn,
Of thy true worth a mute conviction springs,
Whispering thy very self is yet to learn.
Ah! yet to learn—and not alone by me:—
For thine own brightness hides thyself from thee.

LIII.

TO HENRY HALLAM.

—μέγας ἐν μεγάλους—

God's last and rarest gift,—in Thee o'er all
 I count most honour'd Friends seen eminent—
 Justice,—unfearing, inexpugnable
 To the crowd's threats, or party blandishment ;
 —For this, whene'er the harsh fanatic cries
 To crush Truth underfoot, with Liberty,
 From bigots or in Church or Senate rise,
 Beyond all reach of words I honour Thee :—
 England for this will set thy name with those
 Thy page emblazons for congenial worth,
 At whose loved names th' impartial record glows :—
 —With Him, who sightless to the pomps of earth,
 In his own Paradise o'er England mourn'd,
 And that Deliverer by the rabble scorn'd.

LIV.

TO BURNET MORIER.

'My business in this State
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna.'

HAPPY is he who on some wavelapt rock
Sits the long summer-day, nor counts it long ;
And feels the far Atlantic's leaden shock,
And hums the rippled cadence of sweet song :—
Happy to whom in central forest vales
The golden moments golden memories bring ;
Who blesses Life for Life itself, and hails
Greener each year the greenery of Spring.
But happier I who on long Swabian plains
O'er trembling heat-haze see Saint Stephen's shine ;
Changing immediate Spring for deep-sore pains,
For wintry memories, Friendship proved as thine—
Delight by contrast-gloom delighting more,
Love's English welcome to a foreign shore.

LV.

THE BIRTHPLACE.

I.

THERE is a glory round the spot
 Where first she saw the sun :
 Though torrent-thick November rains
 Along the footways run ;
 The middle air with vapours rife
 And overhead be dun :—
 Yet still a glory gilds the spot
 Where first she saw the sun.

II.

It was the springtime of the year :
 And I believe it true
 The dawn put on a richer glow,
 The skies a sweeter blue :
 And thro' the chamber window wide
 A rosy radiance flew :—
 The Angel Child your Mother bore,
 If nurse's tale be true.

III.

If nurse's tale be true, my love,
 The Infant Angel grew :
 And beauty came with golden locks
 And cheeks of rosebud hue :
 And from the sky ran tears and smiles,
 And settled into You :—
 Till childly Friendship bloom'd in Love,
 And Love to Sorrow grew :—

IV.

—But ceaseless thro' the changeful years
The tides of action flow :
While o'er the footways wealth and want
And youth and manhood go :
Nor of the chamber windows high,
Nor of the vision know :
But loving eyes gaze on their fill,
And ancient tears o'erflow.

V.

So let the glory gild the spot
So sweet to sorrow's eye ;
Tho' Spring be blotted from the year,
The promise from the sky :—
And I may view the Angel Maid,
But not without a sigh,
That Angels love their Heav'n too well
To think on such as I.

LVI.

SONG ON A DAY IN SPRING.

DAY that gave Cecilia birth :
Day past all a year in worth :
Thou comest well to come as now
I watch thy radiance rise :
With April smiles upon thy brow,
And tear-drops on thine eyes.

But around and overhead
Laughing azure depths are spread :
And there the lark profuse in fleetness
Note upon note to throng,
Floats reposing on her sweetness,
And satisfied with song.

So thou cam'st with tear and smile :
And from mother's lips the while
Ran happy notes, pain-silenced long,
And sighs from anguish free :—
Till Love's own fullness hush'd the song,
And silence welcomed thee.

As thou cam'st with smile and tear,
So live on, Cecilia dear ;
A human life ; an April day :
For thee the heavens above
An ever cloudless face display,
And all the smiles of Love.

LVII.

SONG.

FROM THE 'NEW PENTAMERON.'

AND is her smile as fair, as when
 Its light to Love first call'd me :—
 Her blush as fleet, her voice as sweet,
 As when it first enthrall'd me ?
 The lustrous wave of locks undimm'd,
 The eye as bright and tearless :—
 The step as sure, the heart as pure,
 The soul as frank and fearless ?

I know she little thinks of me,
 Or heeds my deep despairing :—
 Yet is she not by Love forgot,
 Uncared for, as uncaring.
 But is she still the heav'n she was
 For which my fancy panted—
 Or has Time's spell work'd all too well,
 And left her disenchanted ?

—Ah, how can Spring be aught but Spring,
 Though mine the wint'ry weather ?
 How can it be the charm should flee,
 Or Love from Beauty sever ?
 I doubt not that her eye is bright,
 Although its glance disdains me :—
 No more her voice bids grief rejoice :
 Her image yet enchains me.

LVIII.

THE OFFERING.

FROM THE 'NEW PENTAMERON.'

If the thought, the hope, be rash,
 Sweetest! ah! forgive it:
 Why decline my true love's sign?
 Let me give it!

Through the night the thought has fill'd me:
 Waking should I lose it?
 Through the day the hope has still'd me:
 Why refuse it?

In the hope of pleasing thee
 Was my dearest pleasure:
 In that thought the trifle brought
 Seem'd a treasure.

If the thought, the hope, be rash,
 Sweetest! ah! forgive it:
 Why decline my true love's sign?
 Let me give it!

LIX.

FROM HEINRICH HEINE.

As within thine eyes I look,
All my pain the heart forsook :
When my lips with thine are seal'd,
All the wounds of life are heal'd.

On thy heart when I recline
Heaven's happiness is mine :
When thou say'st, I love but thee :—
Bitter tears fall fast and free.

LX.

LOVE'S TEMPERANCE.

WHEN Chance, in Friendship's cause,
 Unites a stranger pair :
 When heart to heart expands,
 And knows a friend is there :—
 If 'tis your wish that Love endure,
 —Ménagez donc l'Amour.

When cold Indifference' eye
 Your eager friendship foils :
 When wearily on herself
 The broken heart recoils :—
 If 'tis your wish that Love endure,
 —Ménagez donc l'Amour.

When, won at last, the heart
 Unfolds her treasured store :
 When Love yields all his sweets,
 And but unveils the more :—
 If 'tis your wish that Love endure,
 —Ménagez donc l'Amour.

LXI.

ROUNDELAY.

I.

WHEN life was fresh and fearless
 Spring was green and golden :
 And her lusty heart
 Did our hearts embolden.
 From the happy pipings
 Of her daylong quire
 We our music took :
 As the song went high,
 Still our hearts beat higher.

II.

Now tho' Spring be golden,
 'Tis the tint of dying :
 Through her Autumn locks
 Winter gales are sighing.
 'Tis her budding childhood :
 Yet her death is here :
 And the ringing music
 Of her voiceful quire
 Thrills above her bier.

III.

As of old, our life
 Still is free and fearless—
 'Tis the hush of death,
 Calm, and chill, and cheerless.
 O'er our blighted spring-time
 Winter's shade is glooming :
 And the inner music
 Of the echoing heart
 Mocks its former blooming.

LXIII.

SONNET.

‘IT VER, ET VENUS.’

I KNOW not in all life a time more drear
 Than when, pale east winds fading from the blue,
 The palpitating skies their flush renew,
 And with a liquid smile salute the year :
 When Hyperion, (doff'd the shepherd guise,
 Admétus' winter-thrall), waves wide his hair,
 Scattering the mists that bar the fields of air,
 The fleecy cloud-flocks of the dappled skies :—
 —O deep flush'd skies : O passion-trembling blue—
 High heavenly sea for Afrodité's birth !
 In vain her purple light is on the earth,
 In vain her rosy smiles their bow renew :—
 Thoughts of past days a drear heart-winter bring,
 And with gray snow-wreaths stain the heav'n of Spring.

LXIII.

SONG.

I.

WHERE Memory's backward-glancing eye
Beholds her costliest treasures lie,
O be that hour enshrined on high
When first I met her.

Though Time, ere Life be well o'erpast,
May rob her of herself at last,
Yet ne'er till Life with breath be past
Can I forget her.

II.

Her happy eyes—her wavy hair—
Her glowing smiles, are pictured there:—
She was the fairest of the fair
In life's young season :

Nor can I aught the praise deny,
Escape th' infection of her eye,
Or from th' enthralling presence fly,
In days of reason.

III.

The winning ways of childly grace,
The all-confidingness of face,
Those unbought smiles, have yielded place
As years went o'er her:—

O that the days, when Love could dare
His native impulses to share,
The thoughtlessness of thoughts that were,
Were yet before her!

IV.

Her little treasures given of yore
Within my stillest shrine I store :—
Tho' proffer'd trifles, prized before,
Now but estrange her,

Yet Love, that claim'd *her* gifts his own,
Hath o'er the shrine his radiance thrown—
A spell that Life cannot disown,
Or Time endanger.

LXIV.

TANTALUS.

O'er the waves the vessel riding
 Proudly courts the freshening breeze :
 With her course the eye soft gliding
 Lines of coast unfolding sees :
 'Tis a deep and tranquil pleasure
 So to gaze, in helpless leisure,
 On the slopes of corn-clad strand,
 On the strips of gleaming sand.

Ah what sudden sight entrances
 All the eye and all the mind ?
 Who is she that lightly glances
 In the sunshine and the wind ?
 Drest as fits the golden weather ;
 Beauty Youth and Love together :
 Careless glances scattering round :
 Can I here my Love have found ?

Ah too true—Canst thou not spare me
 One enchanting moment's glance,
 Ere the rushing breezes bear me
 From thy sight in harsh advance ?—
 —On the heedless vessel darting
 From myself myself is parting :
 Might mine eyes their anchorage see,
 Haven of the heart, in Thee !

LXV.

SONG. (I)

AIR:—'Bascia mi vita mia.'

Kiss me, my life: kiss me, mine only dearest:
 Stern truth-compelling Death ends life's soft seeming,
 Bitter reveillée, deep delicious dreaming.

Kiss me, my life: kiss me, my first and nearest:
 Love's wakeful eye on heavenward eyes is gleaming:
 Love bids us change a sweeter truth for dreaming.

Kiss me, my little Love: what is't thou fearest?
 So—so—to dry the cheek with tear-drops streaming:
 Thou mine—I thine—thro' waking and thro' dreaming.

LXVI.

SONG. (II)

AIR:—'Bascia mi vita mia.'

SLEEP, Passion, sleep:—what are the fruits of waking?
 Contentment fled: full sighs: and vain aspiring.
 Better 'twere not to love, than live desiring.

Sleep, Passion, sleep—a dateless slumber taking.
 O that mine eyes had ne'er beheld admiring
 That all-too-lovely cause of vain desiring!

Wake, Passion, wake:—and heal this deep-set aching:
 Thine the deep realms of woe:—thy wings untiring
 Alone can scale the heav'n of vain desiring.

LXVII.

PAST AND PRESENT.

YOUTHS.

WHERE are the friends that were ours in our childhood,
 Where are the hearts that we loved in our youth?
 Loved them too lovingly, knew them too nearly:
 Why have we tasted the falsehood of truth?
 Where are the friends that were ours in our childhood,
 Where are the hearts that we loved in our youth?

MAIDENS.

Have we not friends for each day as it passes,
 Love, that each springtide o'erflushes the earth?
 Sigh not for flowers whose fragrance has faded:
 Pluck the fresh grapes for the vine-crown of mirth:
 Are there not friends for each day as it passes,
 Love, that each springtide o'erflushes the earth?

YOUTHS.

How should we charm back the love that we wasted:
 How should we win back the gifts that we gave?
 Wild winds and waters enshroud our best treasure:
 Love has abandon'd us: who then can save?
 How should we charm back the love that we wasted:
 How should we win back the gifts that we gave?

MAIDENS.

Leave to the Past what is past and is faded :
Lost is the lost : why deplore it in vain ?
Love is undying : then trust his disposing :
Clothed in new charms comes the dear one again.
Leave to the Past then the past and the faded :
Lost is the lost : why deplore it in vain ?

LXVIII.

SUMMER GARDEN.

I.

THOU beneath the sun art gay :
 All thine insect life at play :
 All thy flowers rejoice and sing,
 In the noontide revelling,
 Garden, eye and heart's delight,
 Lily Garden, Garden bright,
 Garden in the Summer.

II.

Here would I set up my home,
 In thy world content to roam :
 But our hopes coy Fortune baulks :
 I must leave thy odorous walks :
 Leave my eye and heart's delight,
 Lily Garden, Garden bright,
 Garden in the Summer.

III.

Well I know thou wilt not be
 Changed when next thy flowers I see :
 Sure thy smiles to reassume
 As the tripping seasons come :
 April showers and May's warm light,
 Lily Garden, Garden bright,
 Garden in the Summer.

SUMMER GARDEN.

IV.

Nature ne'er can swerve or stay
In the tenour of her way :
Sure at each return of Spring
Due recurring gifts to bring :
Warmth by day and dews by night,
Lily Garden, Garden bright,
Garden in the Summer.

V.

Ah that Man, who boasts him free,
Oft should cross her wise decree :
That caprice of human force
Should derange her faithful course :
Whose soft hand, thro' dewy night,
Brightness adds to gardens bright,
Gardens in the Summer !

VI.

Aye she greets us with the Spring :
Man denies a welcoming :
Her deep heart beats on unchanged,
Where Man's vagrant soul has ranged :
—Impotence of fancied might !
Learn the lore of gardens bright,
Gardens in the Summer.

VII.

I another Flower have known,
In a wider garden grown :
One short Spring mayhap I've worn her,
But for whom will she adorn her
When in next year's tints art dight
Lily Garden, Garden bright,
Garden in the Summer ?

VIII.

Ah ! one morn the Rose I find
In her opening sweetness kind :
Lo ! the next I grasp the thorn,
In caprice of maiden scorn :

When will soul with soul unite,
Lily Garden, Garden bright,
Garden in the Summer?

IX.

Blithe I leave thy trellis'd bower :
But I dread to quit my Flower,
Lest my next return should find
Time has warp'd the youthful mind.
Ah ! could I then bear thy sight
Lily Garden, Garden bright,
Garden in the Summer?

LXIX.

E S A E I.

THOUGH they say thy lips have spoken
 Vows I may not image broken :
 Though thy happy bosom panting
 Outran all thy words were granting :
 Though thy sweet lips, passion-parted,
 At their own confession started—
 Yet I swear by all above thee
 Past eternity to love thee.

Yet—oh yet—while still the morning
 Views thee wreathed in Bride's adorning :
 Ere the vows, *his* love to cherish
 On the beating echoes perish :
 Ere the day's impassion'd fleetness
 To another yields thy sweetness :—
 Hear my oath by all above thee
 Past eternity to love thee.

By thy childhood's recollection,
 By the truth of young affection,
 By the love the years assure thee,
 By thy sweet self I adjure thee—
 Set the issue full before thee—
 Can another so adore thee ?
 Hear my oath by all above thee
 Past eternity to love thee.

Though I curse the hour that bore me
Where thy beauty first flash'd o'er me :
Though I shed, in wasteful madness,
Heart's blood tears for tears of gladness :
Owning all this life-long weakness,
Ne'er can I disown thy sweetness :
Fix'd and vow'd by all above thee
Past eternity to love thee.

LXX.

IRONY.

I MAY not weep, I may not weep
 The loss of all I held most dear :
 There is no solace in a tear,
 No medicine for the wound of grief,—
 —Too deep, too deep
 For any such relief.

There is no rest from thoughts that throng,
 That flash a Presence through the mind :
 The speaking glance : the voice too kind—
 Too kind to work such utter woe,
 Such bitter wrong,
 Such wreck of all below.

Yet 'neath this sovereign load of ill,
 This vast inseparable regret,
 The world maintains his tenour yet :—
 Their tale of claims the days revive :—
 —Not as we will,
 But as we must we live.

And friend meets friend : hand twines in hand :
 Smiles—laughter—jest—we don the mask :
 We clench us to the daily task :
 We take the common light of things :
 E'en where we stand
 The sun his glory flings.

We may not weep—we know not why:—
 We know not why we smile, nor ask:
 Man acts a mystery 'neath the mask:
 We seek some answer e'en from birth:
 And the reply
 Unrealizes Earth.

LXXI.

PRAYER AND ANSWER.

*'Non pietas ulla 'st, velatum saepe videri
Vertier ad lapidem, atque omnes accedere ad aras;
Nec procumbere humi prostratum, et pandere palmas
Ante Deum delubra, nec aras sanguine multo
Spargere quadrupedum, nec votis nectere vota:
Sed mage pacatâ posse omnia mente tueri.'*

THE day went unregarded by
That was the queen of days before:
Unsweeten'd by the wishful sigh,
Ungladden'd by the tears of yore:—
And is the warmth—the sweetness fled?
The white repose disquieted?
The hope trod down—the love despised—
The Paradise unparadis'd?

Ah no—the eye sees not itself:
The heart its beating life ignores:
Thy love incorporate in thy self,
Thy soul a fancied loss deplores:
Lay by this foolishness of fears;
Weep not for boyhood's priceless tears:
There is no room for such regret:
Thou can'st not, if thou would'st, forget.

Fool!—is thy cry for satiate rest—
Thy prayer for constancy forgot?
Th' ideal of thy youthful breast—
Thou hast thy wish, and know'st it not!
Love in one grave at rest with thee,
Thou art where long thou fain wouldst be—
Th' accomplish'd hope of youth possess—
The death-in-life of changelessness.

LXXII.

IN DESIDERIUM.

'O last Regret—Regret can die.'

You ask me why, when Hope long since
 Has own'd herself but folly,
 I still retain this deep-grooved chain
 Of cankering melancholy.

And I might say we are not free
 Our own fond love to master :
 That we confess her nothingness,
 Yet cling to Hope the faster.

But Hope's sweet eyes are closed with dust,
 Blind to their own 'to-morrow':
 And on the heart Time works his part :
 And 'tis for *that* we sorrow.

'Tis not alone the shrine of grief
 That his pale hand defaces :
 Time's icy breath, a living death,
 Love's very grave effaces.

O thrice accurst—O worse than worst—
 Past all despair's conceiving,
 When 'tis not for the loss we grieve,
 But for the loss of grieving!

LXXIII.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

—Quella man già tanto desiata
 A me parlando e sospirando porse :
 Ond' eterna dolcezza al cor m' è nata—

In dreams I heard thy mother say
 'She yet is ours at dawn of day,
 And ~~his~~ before the setting :—
 And thou wast by thy mother's side,
 And gav'st a sigh of happy pride,
 And sweetness past a life's forgetting.

And I : 'The hour, the hour is come ;
 Thro' thousand days of bitter gloom,
 Thro' long despair rejected :—
 My triumph thy sweet smile declares :
 I take the hand of many prayers,
 I clasp the heart's desire perfected.'

—I wake to know the vision fled ;
 The slumberous sweetness vanished,
 And dreary daylight gleaming.
 —And is the hand—the smile—the sigh—
 Love, all thy tokens vanity ?
 And art thou Love alone in dreaming ?

LXXIV.

FROM TORQUATO TASSO.

CHORUS IN AMINTA.

—Νῦν ἔγνω τὸν Ἔρωτα—

STROPHE.

Love, in what school, of whom should Man most learn
 thee?
 How read thy lesson right
 When on Love's angel-wings, with dizzied sight
 To the ninth heaven borne
 For thine own brightness we can scarce discern thee?
 —Not Athens in her pride of eloquence,
 Not the bright God of Morn,
 Burns in his speech, as he whom Love inspires;—
 Who in thine inmost shrine has touch'd thy fires,
 And goes initiate thence,
 Beyond the wisest wise,
 And holy in thy mysteries.

ANTISTROPHE.

O For thou art self-taught,
 And self-reveal'd alone!
 All thine to lend the language of the eye,
 And give the thoughtless thought,
 And thine to teach the golden oratory
 The pedant schools disown.
 —And often in that better eloquence,
 Those sigh-entangled words, and glance betwixt
 Past all rejoindure fixt
 The soul finds truer utterance,
 And dares a something more than words could dare:—
 Then Silence pleads in her own voiceful prayer.

EPODE.

O then let others haunt Cephísus stream,
And con Love's lore in Academe—
In loving eyes the love of love I learn :—
He holds that erudite strain
In just disdain
Before th' unprompted eloquence of the heart,
The lightning words that burn
Dipt in the passionate fire of artless art.

LXXV.

SUPER MONTES.

I.

TWELVE years, great Land of rock and flood
 And high unalter'd mien ;
 Twelve years have gone since last I view'd
 Thy wildly-working scene :
 Thy waste of seams and scars and shocks :
 Thy silver-threading fountains :
 Thy many-stain'd and lichen'd rocks :
 Thy thousand-wrinkled mountains.

II.

The yearlong murmur of thy rills
 Has kept its constant pace :
 The lucid purple of the hills
 Adorn'd thy sunset face :
 Thine intermittent age has worn
 Its crown of snow-wreaths hoary :
 Thy youth has revell'd in the dawn
 Of Spring's recurrent glory.

III.

The sun melts down behind the screen
 Of yon gray furrow'd steep,
 As though the years that lie between
 Had been a day-tide sleep ;
 And swift and sweet their rosy feet
 Within the realms of seeming :—
 O could we, 'gainst the years of truth,
 Take back one hour of dreaming !

IV.

Old faces haunt us as we go,
And far-off accents rise :
And smiles, which if they yet may glow,
Rejoice another's eyes.
And we are fall'n from all that made
The face of Nature pleasant :
Amid the waste of hopes decay'd
Set in a weary Present.

V.

—Why should the soul be torn by thought
Of still-remember'd faces,
When yearly flowers to fruit are wrought,
And Autumn Spring displaces ?
Earth lays aside her labouring Past
Intent on daily duty :
Regrets and hopes behind has cast,
Secure in present beauty.—

VI.

Ah why should years, that work their task,
And leave the green earth smiling,
Ignore the blessings that we ask,
Our first fond hopes beguiling ?
The Summer bring no wreath for peace :
The Spring, no reassurance :
The Autumn, no new hopes' increase :
The Winter, no endurance ?

LXXVI.

FRIENDS TO FRIENDS.

—Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat—

I.

DEAR Friends! when Memory's eyes are turn'd above,
And on the face of Heaven your faces form;
When telling o'er their wealth of garner'd love
Our world-chill'd spirits warm:

II.

Why then should clouds the purple gladness shade:
What bitter drops the central fountain stain?
Why should Love's amaranthine fragrance fade;
This joy be dash'd with pain?

III.

Your hearts, were ours but worthier to partake,
Their crowning treasures on Love's head would heap:
—But we have sad confession first to make,
And wastefulness to weep.

IV.

There is a silence where the voice is loud—
There is a sadness when the heart is high:
An inner solitude amidst the crowd;
A smile that veils the sigh

V.

When ill-timed jest has baulk'd some warning game,
Or arrowy wit pierced Love's incautious side :
And we too late would fain the scars erase
We dealt in wanton pride.

VI.

Or jealous fancy intervenes to part
When sweet confession on the lips was near ;
When we would speak the message of the heart,
And love from question clear.

VII.

And wild Caprice the purest hours has stain'd,
And coldness paled Affection's eager glow :
Our beggar souls your treasures have disdain'd ;
Then wept our loss to know.

VIII.

Ah sever'd souls—that meet and may not touch !
Ah foolish Love—that will not what he may !
—There is one hope for Hope : We have loved much,
And so forgiveness pray.

LXXVII.

IN MEMORIAM

C. W.

 APRIL 30, 1851.

I.

I CANNOT praise thee as I would,
 I cannot speak thy worth aright :
 For Death brings Silence, hand in hand,
 When some dear voice is hush'd in night.
 Nor wouldst thou, could the hours relive
 That took their gladness from thy mirth,
 Accept the praises I could give,
 All too unconscious of thy worth.

II.

Ah yet the heart within the heart
 A blind instinctive truth will sway :
 We cannot hush the voice of grief
 When golden souls are snatch'd away.
 When Nature mars the gift she gave :
 When Hope her prophecy disowns :
 When Love cries muffled from the grave,
 And Death is hollow in her tones.

III.

What though he shares th' enduring calm
 The restless mind to life denied—
 That incommunicable sleep
 From earthly tumult disallied—
 Our earthly love this severance fears—
 This barrier set 'twixt him and me :—
 —Yet trust I that these idle tears
 Are not all valueless to thee.

IV.

We yet recall a vanish'd form :
The voices of the Past we store :
We know the treasure we have lost :
We are not what we were before.
So true—so high—so brave—so bright—
So careless wise—so native good—
—We cannot speak thy worth aright,
We cannot praise thee as we would.

THRENOS.

True—noble—generous—loving—brave—
Not all that birthright-wealth could save
The sleeper from a youthful grave.

For God, to snatch him from the pain
Of aspirations urged in vain,
Hath to Himself His treasure ta'en.

LXXVIII.

THE BUTTERFLY.

*'Animula vagula, blandula
Quae nunc abibis in loca?'*

I.

THOU that art on the flowers,
 Pure flickering of whiteness :
 At the first touch of showers
 Quick veiling thy brightness :
 In the gray clear of morning,
 In its freshness I found thee,
 The white speck adorning
 Red roses around thee.
 What spirit had brought thee,
 What breeze borne thee hither ?
 In vain I besought thee,
 Whence was it, and whither ?

II.

The great Sun in his power
 High over us blazing,
 From bud, leaf, and flower,
 Faint odours is raising :
 Yet thou stay'st not thy ranging,
 Thy roving unceasing,
 Their sweets interchanging,
 Their treasures releasing.
 Not in vain have I sought thee :
 What breeze bore thee hither ?
 What spirit hath brought thee,
 Whence was it, and whither ?

III.

'Tis thine o'er the roses
To dart and to hover,
Till day's palace closes,
Till sunlight is over.
Where dost thou betake thee
What flower is thy hiding?
To rest, till morn wake thee,
Or for endless abiding?
Will thy Soul yet renew her
In fresh forms of brightness?
Will grim Death pursue her,
And weigh down her lightness?
Once immortal I thought thee—
What breeze bore thee hither?
What spirit hath brought thee—
Whence was it, and whither?

LXXIX.

DAS IMMERGRÜN.

I WEEP a loss for ever fresh,
 A grief for ever young :
 A deafening cry of ceaseless woe
 An inner weight of utterance low
 For ever, ever, on the heart is hung,
 Tho' rarely on the tongue.
 All things are wither'd from their birth :
 Gone is the glory of the earth :—
 —Yet as of yore the fields are green,
 Th' eternal heavens blue :
 Moon, stars, and sun their courses run,
 And Life is born anew.

—We stood within the quiet field,
 Beneath the quiet sky.
 They laid her in her quiet bed :
 The dead cold earth received the dead :
 They hid her from the mute enquiring eye :
 She seem'd again to die.
 All things with her must fail and fade :
 Earth lies beneath th' entombing shade :—
 —Yet as of yore the fields are green,
 Th' eternal heavens blue :
 Moon, stars, and sun their courses run,
 And Life is born anew.

O cold gray walls! O quiet field!
O bitter voiceless sky!
O silent earth,—her narrow bed—
Where are the spirits of the Dead?—
In silent woe we gaze around—on high—
And silence makes reply.—
That azure veil but masks the pall:
There is one common end for all:—
—Yet as of yore the fields are green,
Th' eternal heavens blue:
Moon, stars, and sun their courses run,
And Life is born anew.

So we accept our victim lot:
We bend us to the knife.
Grief brings no anodyne for grief:
And to forget were worse relief:—
—The World renews itself by love and strife:
Life heeds no former life.
Our lesson speaks where she lies low;
We hide our woe within our woe:—
—For as of yore the fields are green,
Th' eternal heavens blue:
Moon, stars, and sun their courses run,
And Life is born anew.

LXXX.

ABSENCE.

'I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me.'

I.

I **KNEW** thy love could not increase,
For it had reach'd its prime :
I had no fear Love's flower would sere,
Shrunk by the touch of Time.

II.

I knew that Birth had cast our lot,
Had twined our thread in one :
How then should Time unloose the knot
A higher Fate had spun ?

III.

I said The common birth of Love
His common end foreshews :
A hasty sight—a quick delight—
A sudden stroke may close.

IV.

Our love on firmer bases set
Such transience may defy :
In life's first morn with us 'twas born :
With us alone may die.

V.

Beneath its healthful shade we grew,
Each intertwined with each :
I sought not signs to show thee true,
Or coarser proof of speech.

ABSENCE.

VI.

Mine were the treasures of thy love,
The blessing of thy sight:
I ask'd not joys around, above,
Secure in such delight.

VII.

Mine was the guidance of thy tongue:
Thy thoughts to mine were known:—
—Another's ear thy voice may hear,
And rob me of mine own.

VIII.

Was it my sin that I should love
The loving and true-hearted:
Though now the curse than death be worse
That holds the living parted?

IX.

Was it my sin that I should build
A home for hope on thee:
Though now the hope rest unfulfill'd,
The home deserted be?

X.

—Thou saidst: I go: yet space may bind
Near household ties yet nearer:
I go: yet absence hours shall find
Dear hearts to dear hearts dearer.

XI.

—I would not say that Hope and Love
With frailness are infected:
To mortal laws, though born above,
To Time and space subjected.

XII.

Who would not hide the change he feels
As days to years advance:
Or barter truth that Time reveals,
For happier ignorance?

XIII.

This is my deepest source of pain:
 I cannot see thy face :
 That long horizons part us twain :
 Blue pathless tracts of space.

XIV.

That hearts dislink'd to dearer love
 And deeper knowledge grow not :
 I know it not, if Love be dead :
 And if he lives, I know not.

XV.

In written words what solace lies,
 What interchange of heart ?
 —Almost I said : Would one were dead !
 If life from life must part.

XVI.

—I fret myself with thoughts untrue :
 I cannot wish 'twere so :
 The thought may rise : 'twill end in sighs :
 In silence pass and go.

XVII.

—I said : Desires and hopes are vain
 What must Remembrance be ?
 I said : 'Twere better to restrain
 The soul from thoughts of thee.

XVIII.

My heart in patient calm is set,
 Whate'er the future brings :
 Why should I weep for joys that sleep
 With dead forgotten things ?

XIX.

Dear friendly tongues their counsel add
 In happy self-deceiving :
 Alas ! the counsels of the glad
 Can never aid the grieving.

XX.

—I dare not thrust the Past aside,
Or bid remembrance flee:
Such sweetness to such grief allied
Is in the thought of thee.

XXI.

I dare not set the touch of scorn
On vanish'd hours of pleasure :
Or disesteem in thought or dream
Th' irrevocable treasure.

XXII.

A sweetness lingers undisplaced
That ruin'd Past above :
A shrine by Love's own hand defaced,
Yet sacred still to Love.

XXIII.

E'en though the fretful dust of life
Heap o'er the fond regret :
Yet Sleep unsought restores the thought
That daylight could forget.

XXIV.

Her spells a breath of old relief.
Waft o'er the soul again :
Or lend a shade to waking grief,
A purer depth of pain.

XXV.

I see th' authentic vision rise
Bright in the bloom of youth:
I catch the light of eager eyes,
The levell'd glance of truth.

XXVI.

I feel thy fingers clasp'd in mine :
A touch of loyal greeting :
A transient touch, that gives no sign
Of a long sigh'd for meeting.

XXVII.

On trivial cares thy accents dwell,
 And walk in common ways :
 Alas ! no tones of fear foretel
 The wrong of coming days.

XXVIII.

Time's creeping interspace appears
 Swift as an arrow's flight :—
 —Ah that the sum of lingering years
 Could win thee to our sight.—

XXIX.

—My lips with unrelieving words
 An idle dalliance hold :—
 —I wake : the thought that sleep had brought
 Lies weak and still and cold.

XXX.

With signs of thee the room is rife,
 A sad remindful scene :
 The relics of thy daily life,
 And where thy feet have been.

XXXI.

The day wears on : the toil, the fret
 No inner solace brings :
 While grief her affluent source hath set
 Deep in the heart of things.

XXXII.

—Yet on my soul this throng of things
 A touch of fear hath laid :
 Lest thoughts of thee should waste and flee :
 Lest thy remembrance fade.

XXXIII.

I know the phantom bliss of night
 Must leave the heart still aching :—
 —Yet worse the vacant stir of light,
 The joyless joys of waking.

XXXIV.

I'd give the morning for the night
E'en through such hours to be
Loosed from the chain of action vain
Alone with thoughts of thee.

LXXXI.

HIC JACET.

‘Mich treibt umher ein unbezwinglich Sehnen :
Da bleibt kein Rath als gränzenlose Thränen.’

WHERE she lies low—where she lies low
The great world and its clamours sleep :
The low soft winds above her creep,
Above the mould, amid the grass,
And shake the tearful flowers that blow
Where she lies low.

The ghostly height of gray cold walls
That tower above the couch of death
Stands shrouded in the marish breath,
Till first the stealthy dawn strikes through,
And smites them with a silvery glow
Where she lies low.

But ever, ever higher yet
The lark, full poised on pinion strong,
Pours forth the silver drops of song,
Then wearied on her turf he drops,
And folds his speckled wings in woe
Where she lies low.

—The earth transfigures her in light :
The living sun is whirl'd on high :—
O golden day ! O happy sky !
O bright satiety of joy !
Ye mock the settled shades of woe
Where she lies low.

And Childhood seats her on the turf,
And shares the noontide meal with joy :
Girl smiles to girl : boy laughs to boy :
—They go :—the robin quits the bush,
And treads the careless flowers that grow
Where she lies low.

And Evening reddens through the blue,
And Day, self-touch'd with happy shame
Dyes her fair cheek with tints of flame,
And blushes at her own delight :
—But lengthening shades of twilight flow
Where she lies low.

O irony of joyless joy !
O soulless world ! O hopeless sky !
O cold keen stars, that watch on high !
O all bright things, your glory veil !
There is but one long night of woe
Where she lies low.

Is there no pity in the sun,
No note of grief in childly mirth ?
Is there no echo from the earth ?
Is there no answer in the sky ?
No sign, but endless tears that flow
Where she lies low ?

—Where she lies low—where she lies low,
There is the hush of holy sleep :
The dewy flowers in silence weep :
There is no place for voice or cry :
It is the utter heart of woe
Where she lies low.

LXXXII.

L'ENVOY.

—' Ah ! discender ti piaccia
Ov' lo t' invito ; ah ! vieni !'—

AND do not think that childhood's love
Has waned with years advancing :—
Ah do not hold thy sweetness less,
Thy presence less entrancing !

And do not dream my silence tells
A tale of lost affection :
That absence hides the conscious shame
Of recreant recollection.

The mother sees the child she lost
Thro' nightlong watches weeping :—
I find none other like to thee
Thro' waking or thro' sleeping.

And, heart-hid from the lips, thy name
On Love's fond sighs is nearest ;
The dear dear face I may not see
For evermore the dearest.

THE END.

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